



ASHESI UNIVERSITY

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IN THE
CHOICE OF EATERY OF ASHESI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.**

Undergraduate dissertation submitted to the Department of Business Administration,
Ashesi University. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration

B.Sc. Business Administration

Esi Chrissie Amissah-Arthur

May 2020

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's signature:.....

Candidate's name: Esi Chrissie Amissah-Arthur

Date: 11th May, 2020

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by Ashesi University.

Supervisor's signature:.....

Supervisor's name: Dr. Josephine Djan

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to God for granting me strength, wisdom and understanding to complete this project successfully. My heartfelt appreciation also goes to my Supervisor, Dr. Josephine Djan for her guidance and immeasurable support throughout each stage of the dissertation. Her meticulous and constructive feedback have been vital to the success I have attained so far, towards the completion of this project.

I would like to appreciate my family, especially my nuclear family, for their love and unflinching support throughout this dissertation process. I would also like to acknowledge my second reader, Ms. Rose Dodd, for her guidance and encouragement. My final gratitude goes to all my friends, especially my Thesis Study Group partners and Loretta Adaakwah, who assisted me by offering useful suggestions to improve my chapter on methodology. God will greatly reward you all.

ABSTRACT

Poor customer service has had diverse forms of impact on businesses all around the world and eateries are no exception. Statements such as “Their food tastes good but there are just too many flies around” and “The food tastes really good but they always get my order wrong” are a few of several opinions that customers of Ashesi eateries have shared concerning their customer service experiences. Research has also proven that customer service plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of several individuals. This dissertation therefore investigated whether the fact that customer service plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of several individuals is true for Ashesi students and whether a student’s perception of bad or good customer service quality affects their decision in choosing an eatery. Using the DINESERV model, this study employed a mixed method approach, using an online survey and semi-structured interviews and the data was analyzed in the form of case studies for the various eateries. Additionally, a quantitative analysis of the hypothesis using the Chi-Square Test was conducted to measure the relationship between *customer service* and *choice of eatery* of Ashesi students. The results of the research revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between both variables (p-value of 0.882). Conclusively, Food quality and variety, not Customer Service, play a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students and a student’s perception of bad or good customer service quality may not influence their choice of eatery.

Keywords: Customer Service, Eateries, Customer Perceived Service Quality

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
LIST OF TABLES	VIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	IX
DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	X
CHAPTER 1:INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND.....	3
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 METHODOLOGY	7
1.8 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY	7
CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 INTRODUCTION	9
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.2.1 <i>The SERVQUAL Model</i>	9
2.2.2 <i>The DINESERV Model</i>	13
2.3 THE CUSTOMER	17
2.4 CUSTOMER SERVICE	18
2.5 CUSTOMER SERVICE IN EATERIES	23
2.6 EATERY IMPROVEMENT POLICIES	26
2.7 FACTORS AFFECTING CUSTOMER’S SELECTION OF EATERIES.....	28
2.8 THE CUSTOMER’S PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY	29
CHAPTER 3:METHODOLOGY	32
3.1 INTRODUCTION	32
3.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	32
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	33
3.3.1 <i>Research Variables</i>	33
3.3.2 <i>Data Sources</i>	34
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS	36
3.5 SAMPLING SIZE AND TECHNIQUE	36
3.6 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS	37
3.7 ETHICAL CONCERNS	38
CHAPTER 4:RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	39
4.1 INTRODUCTION	39

4.2	PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS	40
4.2.1	<i>Consent</i>	40
4.2.2	<i>Demographics</i>	41
4.2.3	<i>Patronage of All Three Eateries</i>	43
4.2.4	<i>Non-Patronage of All Three Eateries</i>	44
4.3	FURTHER ANALYSIS.....	46
4.3.1	<i>The Hypothesis</i>	46
4.3.2	<i>The Significance of the Role of Customer Service</i>	48
4.3.3	<i>The Significance of the Role of Customer Perceived Service Quality</i>	50
4.4	CAFETERIA CASE STUDIES	53
4.4.1	<i>Akornor Cafeteria</i>	53
4.4.2	<i>Big Ben Cafeteria</i>	59
4.4.3	<i>Lynes Cafeteria</i>	65
	CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	71
5.1	CONCLUSION.....	71
5.2	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	71
5.2.1	<i>Recommendations to Eateries</i>	72
5.2.2	<i>Recommendations to Ashesi Students and the University</i>	73
5.3	LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH.....	73
	REFERENCES.....	74
	APPENDICES	81

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. ONLINE SURVEY RESEARCH FLOW	35
FIGURE 2. PICTORIAL VIEW OF CONSENT RESPONSES.....	41
FIGURE 3. GRAPH OF YEAR GROUPS	42
FIGURE 4. NATIONALITY OF RESPONDENTS	43
FIGURE 5. BAR CHART OF PREFERRED EATERY OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE PATRONISED ALL THREE EATERIES	44
FIGURE 6. BAR CHART OF PREFERRED EATERY OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE NOT PATRONISED ALL THREE EATERIES	45
FIGURE 7. ROAD MAP OF ONLINE SURVEY	46
FIGURE 8. CHI-SQUARE FORMULA	47
FIGURE 9. CHI-SQUARE TEST OF HYPOTHESIS	48
FIGURE 10. GRAPH OF REASONS FOR CUSTOMERS' CHOICE OF EATERY	50
FIGURE 11. OVERALL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FOR AKORNOR CAFETERIA.....	59
FIGURE 12. OVERALL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FOR BIG BEN CAFETERIA	64
FIGURE 13. OVERALL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FOR LYNES CAFETERIA	70
FIGURE 14. CONTINGENCY TABLE FOR CHI-SQUARE TEST OF HYPOTHESIS.....	89

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. STRATIFIED SAMPLING PROCEDURE	37
--	----

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

POS - Point of Sale System

SPSS - Statiscal Product and Service Solutions

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Customer Service - Customer Service is defined as a management strategy that focuses on satisfying the expectations of customers (Fogli, 2006).

Customer Perceived Service Quality - Customer Perceived Service Quality can be defined as the difference between a customer's expectation of service quality and a customer's perception of the service based on factors contributing towards the final output of the service (Sumaedi, Bakit & Metasari, 2011).

DINESERV model - The DINESERV model is another famous model used in the measurement of service quality and it was initially proposed by Stevens, Knutson & Patton (1995) to be used as an instrument for measuring specifically, service quality in all types of eatery settings.

Eatery – This is another name given to a restaurant or a dining place.

SERVQUAL model - The SERVQUAL model as originally proposed by Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml (1993) is one of the most popular models used in the industry of service marketing to analyze the perception gap between the service quality a customer receives and the service quality a customer expects.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

“The customer is king” and “put the customer first” are slogans often encountered in business literature and mounted prominently on walls of several organizations. On the walls of those organizations therefore is a loud statement declaring the organization’s commitment to the customer and also to sensitize and align employees with that declaration. It is the recognition that customers are the reason for an organization’s existence and that the organization exists to provide the customer with value. Customer Service plays a fundamental role in delivering that value, and in the success of any business (Sabir et al., 2014).

Customer Service is thus variously defined as a management strategy that focuses on satisfying the expectations of customers (Fogli, 2006). This description of Customer Service stems from the notion that an organization can only achieve their goals and objectives effectively and efficiently, if they satisfy their customers’ expectations (Fogli, 2006). Customer expectations are a customer’s desires and wants that are developed for factors such as response time, empathy, courtesy and reliability in a service encounter usually resulting from exposure to advertisements or word of mouth about the service (Kendall, 2006).

According to Miao & Wang Bassham (2007), excellent customer service leads to happy customers, which in turn results in larger profits. A firm can make large profits from the service that is rendered to customers, as good service delivery will lead to positive word of mouth, hence attracting new customers who were previously not active users of the service. Poor service on the other hand, can be measured by a significant

reduction in the revenue of a particular organization. If an organization has employees in their customer service division who do not exhibit good customer service skills, although the organization may have a monopoly in the delivery of that particular service, very few loyal customers will remain. Thus, an employee who has been oriented to exhibit good customer service is expected to be enthusiastic, attentive, reliable, empathetic and have a propensity to remember important details of customers (Schmit & Allscheid, 1995).

Customer Service is therefore an important factor in Customer Retention: the happier your customers are with the service you provide, the more likely they are to patronize your service in the future (Al-Tit, 2015).

Customer Service has several benefits to both employers and employees. For employees, customer service orientation serves as an avenue for them to improve their social skills and it also gives them some level of authority to make decisions about issues that concern customers' interests (Kim, 2009). Customer service is highly interactive and requires a mastery of an individual's social skills; thus this orientation will serve as an avenue for employers to share their experiences with their employees to build them up for the task ahead. Employees also build rapport with customers through customer service, which has an influence on customer loyalty (Yacout, 2010).

The impact of customer service on a business is seen through the value it brings to the customer and the business as a whole. It is important that a business collects all the information that is required to serve customers in the preliminary stages of contact so as to deliver output that exceeds the customer's expectations, hence, creating value in the process (Pecinová & Branská, 2008).

Research conducted by Jahanshahi, Gashti, Mirdamadi, Nawaser & Khaksar (2011) highlights certain key features of excellent customer service that organisations must uphold. Some of these features include: upper management leadership, reliable marketing communications, employee awareness and skill among others. The observance of these values will make their service delivery highly profitable. These features lay emphasis on the fact that customer service is expected of not only employees who have high contact with customers but also each individual in the organization.

1.2 Background

The Ashesi community is served by a number of eateries. The eateries play an important role in the economy of the Ashesi community – community health, time management, schoolwork, money, and other economic resources management.

According to Qin & Prybutok (2008), there are four general factors that influence the customer service experience in an eatery. These factors include: price, food quality, service quality, and the physical environment; these, in turn, affect customer satisfaction and further cause them to make the decision to re-visit the eatery or recommend it to other potential customers. Nonetheless, this study focused solely on customer service as an influential factor in choosing an eatery.

Ashesi University Campus officially houses three eateries, namely Akornor Cafeteria, Big Ben Cafeteria and Lynes Cafeteria. They serve breakfast, lunch and supper on a daily basis to the Ashesi Community. In the early years of Ashesi University, Akornor Cafeteria had a monopoly in providing eatery services as it was the only cafeteria on campus at that time. However, with the growing student population, the

University management and the elected student governments took the necessary steps to provide the additional two cafeterias.

Although there are other cafeterias off the Ashesi campus generally referred to as ‘off-campus cafeterias’, Akornor Cafeteria, Big Ben Cafeteria and Lynes Cafeteria are located on campus and serve a majority of the student body. Hence, they are the focus of this study. Ashesi students are generally well to do with statistics showing that 57% of the student body are full fee paying students; that is, they are able to fund their tuition and books without financial aid or any kind of support from scholarship foundations (2019/2020 Academic Year Statistical Report, Academic Registry, Ashesi University, 2019). By implication, Ashesi students will anticipate good customer service experiences at the eateries on campus, in addition to paying attention to other general factors such as price, service quality, and food quality among others.

1.3 Problem Statement

Poor customer service has several implications on the success of a business. The utmost impact of poor customer service on a business is the reduction in its sales revenue from loss of customers. In eateries, customer service is one of the key success factors and it is ranked high in the success factors list and in the list of expectations of customers. It is projected to yield the results perceived in the mind of the customer (Groth & Grandey, 2012).

Consistent with the observations of Poku & Zakari (2013), service providers must avoid complacency in their delivery of service as their retained customers may not always be satisfied with their service. This dissatisfaction mostly stems from the poor

customer service attitudes displayed by employees which may not have been addressed within the organization or business. “I never get my food on time” and “ When I was ordering, the server was talking to someone else in the background” are statements that emphasize customers’ dissatisfaction due to poor customer service in Ashesi eateries.

Customer Service is believed to play an important role in the choice of eateries of several people around the world and Ashesi is no likely exception. Customer service affects consumer buying behavior and has an impact on future patronage (Islam et al., 2018). This statement formed the basis for the following null and alternate hypothesis:

H₀- There is no relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

H₁- There is a relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

This study sought to test the validity of these hypotheses to ascertain whether customer service has a significant influence on the choice of eatery of the students in the Ashesi community or whether other factors such as price, food quality, service quality, physical environment, loyalty, taste and food preferences, among others, play a role.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was conducted to find answers to the two questions that follow;

1. Does customer service play a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students?
2. What is a student’s perception of bad/good customer service quality and does it affect their decision in choosing an eatery?

1.5 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is;

1. To examine whether customer service plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students.
2. To assess whether a student's perception of bad or good customer service quality affects their decision in choosing an eatery.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Customer service is a key success and survival factor and essential in service delivery, influencing the choice of eatery of various individuals around the world.

Research conducted by Pariyar (2014) bears similarities to this current study. Pariyar's research, however, focused on comparing customer service among seven restaurants in a particular town called Kokkola but failed to throw light on or adequately answer whether customer service affected the customers' choice of restaurants in that particular area where the research was conducted. Only five out of the seven restaurants responded favorably which further narrowed the study.

The present study is however important because it will help the various eateries in Ashesi to focus on providing good customer service and make the necessary interventions to ensure customer satisfaction in the running of their day-to-day activities, should the results show that the alternate hypothesis holds. It will also lead to knowledge creation that will contribute to the augmenting of existing literature on the subject of service delivery, service encounters, and their appraisal.

1.7 Methodology

The study employed the mixed method research approach, making use of research tools such as interviews and online surveys, and the Chi-Square Test for the quantitative analysis. Stratified Sampling Technique was used to obtain a representative sample of the student body. The population size of Ashesi University students is 1,173 and a representative sample of this population is approximately 300 students with a margin of error of +/- 5% (Conroy, 2015). This technique was used because it involves dividing a population into separate groups called *strata* and the students in Ashesi University are already stratified. This stratification was therefore tailored based on the nationality and the year group of students, and eight (8) strata were obtained. These strata include: Seniors (Class of 2020), Juniors (Class of 2021), Sophomores (Class of 2022) and Freshmen (Class of 2023) which were all further divided into Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaians. The analysis of the data was presented in the form of Case Studies for the qualitative research and a Chi-Square analysis for the quantitative research. Case Study was used as the strategic qualitative design for this study because the data to be collected is related to the opinions and experiences of the participants.

1.8 Organization of Study

This thesis is structured under five major chapters. The introduction is the first chapter and it comprises the Background to the Study, the Problem Statement, Objectives of the Study, the Significance of the study and the Organization of the study. The literature review, which is the second chapter, involves a review of existing literature on customer service in eateries as well as customers' perceptions of service quality in

eateries. The Methodology is the third chapter of the study and it expatiates on the procedures involved in achieving the objectives of this study. This includes the type of research conducted as well as methods of data collection and analysis. An analysis and presentation of findings are outlined in the fourth chapter. Finally, the fifth chapter presents the conclusion of the research and recommendations based on the results obtained from the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an analysis of theoretical literature relevant to this topic. This chapter contains seven (7) major segments, some of which have subdivisions. The first segment is the theoretical framework which contains the models that underpin this study. The remaining six segments are reviews of literature on the customer, customer service, customer service in eateries, eatery improvement policies, factors influencing customers' selection of eateries and customers' perception of service quality in eateries.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by the SERVQUAL model and the DINESERV model.

2.2.1 *The SERVQUAL Model*

The SERVQUAL model as originally proposed by Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml (1993) is one of the most popular models used in the industry of service marketing to analyze the perception gap between the service quality a customer receives and the service quality a customer expects. According to research by Ravichandran, Mani, Kumar & Prabhakaran (2010), this model has been a framework for measuring consumer's perception of service quality over the years under five dimensions namely; reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles. These dimensions have been applied in several service industries, specifically the hospitality industry of which eateries play an active role. The SERVQUAL model is essential to this study and specifically to eateries because research has revealed that if employers or service

providers are able to decipher its effectiveness in their field of service, clients will remain loyal as a result of the excellent service they will be receiving (Ravichandran, Mani, Kumar & Prabhakaran, 2010).

The first dimension of the SERVQUAL model is Tangibles and comprises the appearance of the physical facilities, personnel as well as communication material used in service delivery (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). With respect to tangibles in an eatery, the employers or service providers such as the chef, managers, waiters as well as the doorman are some personnel in the eatery that perform unflinching roles in the segment of tangibles. Again, physical facilities such as the kind and arrangement of furniture can play an important role in the appearance of the eatery to customers, hence affecting their decision to patronize a meal from the eatery. Communication materials include name tags for employees as well as engaging customers in beneficial rapport with the aim of improving service delivery through their feedback.

Reliability is the second dimension of the SERVQUAL model and it refers to the service providers' ability to deliver accuracy in the service that they promised the customer (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). In eateries, reliability is evident in several spheres such as food delivery, taking orders and serving accurate orders. Customers are very particular about reliability as it informs their decision on future patronage. Reliability is said to play a vital role in a customer's perception of service quality in the food sector. A study conducted by Shandilya, Singh & Srivastava (2018), showed that when the SERVQUAL model was used in testing their perception of service quality with regard to the food sector, reliability received the most significance. An eatery that is able to deliver reliable services consistently, first leaves a lasting impression

on the minds of customers and also builds a good name for itself. This will then lead to positive word of mouth and attract more customers, hence, high profitability for the firm.

The third dimension of the SERVQUAL model is responsiveness. This refers to the willingness of service providers to offer prompt responses to customers, the capability to properly handle complaints as well as lend a helping hand to customers when they are in need (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). An exploration conducted by Babić-Hodović, Arslanagić-Kalajdžić & Banda (2015) publicized that there are certain essential segments that need to be addressed with respect to service providers' responsiveness to customers. Some of these segments are nonetheless embedded in the definition of responsiveness such as willingness to help, rapt attention in noting and delivering requests, and prompt addressing of customers' complaints. This will first make the customer feel important as he or she will believe that their opinion plays a crucial role in service delivery. Finally, it will give service providers an opportunity to redeem themselves with respect to the customers' perception of the business.

Assurance is the fourth dimension of the SERVQUAL model and encompasses the service providers' ability to inspire trust and confidence in the customer about the service being provided (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). Assurance is essential in promoting customer loyalty. For instance, if a customer walks into an eatery and wants to try a new meal on the menu, the waiter or waitress must be able to convince the customer that he or she is making a good decision and advise on the contents of the meal just in case the customer has any known allergies. This is one way service providers can inspire trust and confidence in their customers.

A study conducted by Shi & Wang (2011) revealed that there are certain indexes for evaluating the service quality attributes. With respect to assurance, the evaluation indexes are the safety of the eatery, the sanitation or cleanliness of the eatery as well as politeness of staff (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). If the service scape of the eatery is not conducive for dining purposes, customers will withdraw from even considering the eatery as an option. The study further revealed that out of all the indexes that were tested, sanitation was what customers considered the most essential segment of assurance in service delivery (Shi & Wang, 2011).

The last dimension of the SERVQUAL model is empathy and it states that specialized care and attention must be provided to each customer as a way to personalize their experiences (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1993). There are several facets of empathy; the key ones are communication and personalized attention. Communication is concerned with the ability of service providers to disseminate information to the understanding of customers. It also includes the service provider's ability to clearly list and advertise the meals that are available on specific days, possibly on a display screen, or a board at the entrance to the eatery. Personalized attention consists of the process of giving each customer a unique experience (Lucas, 2012). This can be achieved by calling the customers by their names for pick up when they place orders. Service providers can also task front liners of the organization to write the customers' names on their orders as a way to personalize their service experience.

2.2.2 *The DINESERV Model*

The DINESERV model is another famous model used in the measurement of service quality and it was initially proposed by Stevens, Knutson & Patton (1995) to be used as an instrument for measuring service quality in all types of eatery settings. The DINESERV model is known to play a significant role in the performance of eateries as it has the capacity to compare overall quality scores with the average performance of a set of similar service components in order to help determine the services that are underperforming and those that are performing to the highest standards (Adeinat, 2019).

The DINESERV model presents several similarities to the SERVQUAL model as the dimensions of both models are the same; nonetheless, the compositions of service quality of both differ. Research by Adeinat (2019) further revealed that the DINESERV model has a limitation: it does not provide service providers with specific quality dimensions, which makes measuring service quality tedious. A study conducted by Markovic, Komsic, & Stifanic (2013) disclosed that Reliability, which is one of the dimensions of the DINESERV model, has been found to be the most important dimension, followed by tangibles and the remaining dimensions earlier mentioned.

Unlike the SERVQUAL model, the DINESERV model has two additional dimensions attached to it which are price and satisfaction, measured by different attributes or factors (Markovic, Komsic & Stifanic, 2013). The factors considered under tangibles include an attractive dining area. Customers can be positively or negatively affected by the dining area in which service providers serve their food. For instance, if a customer walks into an eatery and is met with flies and other rodents, he or she may be immediately put off by the surroundings. Again, service providers must be neat and

appropriately dressed to welcome customers. Service providers are easily approachable when they are well-dressed and can be called on for help when the customer is facing any challenges with the service being offered.

Reliability which has been proven to be the most important dimension in the DINESERV model; is measured based on the service provider's ability to deliver on their promise with respect to the product or service that the customer has purchased. Service providers that are able to provide and deliver the exact product or service customers want, have customers repurchasing their product or service which in turn leads to profitability in the long run. Secondly, the service provider must be trustworthy and consistent. This means that the customer should expect the same service treatment in every service encounter from the service provider in order to be high in the rank of the tangibles dimension (Markovic, Komsic & Stifanic, 2013).

The third dimension of the DINESERV model is Responsiveness (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995). It is based on three important attributes which are the service providers' promptness to serve their customers, the speed and quality of service delivered by service providers during peak times of service and finally, the ability of service providers to handle demands of customers with special needs (Bougoure & Neu, 2010). These three attributes are vital to assessing the reliability of service providers in attending to their customers' needs. Service providers' must be able to provide excellent customer service regardless of the time of the day, as long as their eatery is open. Some customers are fully aware that there are certain peak times in eateries where there is an influx of customers. Nonetheless, they would still like to be attended to without having to wait

long hours (Hwang, 2008). This is a test of reliability with regard to a service providers' ability to satisfy and exceed the expectations of his or her customers.

Assurance is the fourth dimension of the DINESERV model, and the core of this dimension is concerned with an employee's ability to answer questions adequately to meet the needs of customers, the ability of employees to be able to confidently provide information about the eatery's menu as well as the ingredients used in the preparation of some of the eatery's lavish dishes (Hansen, 2014). Again, the employees' ability to make the customer feel safe about the service or product he or she is purchasing is an attribute of the dimension, responsiveness (Hansen, 2014). Service providers and employees must always be ready to give the customer every reason to purchase the product or service they are inquiring about. This is to help clarify any questions concerning their purchase, perceived in their minds or seen through advertisements or other media channels.

The fifth dimension of the DINESERV model is empathy and is characterized by the employees' ability to give customers individualized attention (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995). Although customers are aware that other customers are receiving the same service, they still require special attention from service providers in service delivery. For instance, in an eatery, if two customers order a burger and a pack of fries and these customers are sitting tables apart, the waiter or waitress must be careful to exhibit the same friendliness with both customers as he or she would not want either customer to feel out of place. This is a classic example of giving customers individualized attention. Another attribute of this dimension is the skill of employees to exhibit sympathy in dealing with customers and reassuring them of excellent service delivery even when there are slight glitches in the process. Customers need to be given the assurance that

regardless of delays in service delivery and faults in products or service processes, service providers will still deliver the products and services to the customers' specifications and satisfaction.

Finally, price and satisfaction are the additional dimensions of the DINESERV model. With respect to price, an employee must be able to explain why a customer is paying more than expected or planned (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995). Several customers become dissatisfied when service providers are unable to clearly define the price they expect their customers to pay for a particular product or service. This may occur as a result of an increment in taxes on those goods or service, or inflation in the market. Employees must also be able to empathize and explain the reason for expensive food items to customers because not all customers are well to-do, hence, have a limited budget for their expenditure. This therefore makes it difficult for them to improvise when they arrive at service locations, and realize that the prices of the service or product they recently patronized, is higher than expected (Keith & Simmers, 2011)

Satisfaction on the other hand, is comprised of a customer's overall satisfaction with the service experience at the eatery as well as being able to transmit positive word of mouth about the eatery to other customers, leading to high profitability (Markovic, Komsic, & Stifanic, 2013). Satisfaction plays a fundamental role in repurchase, and eateries employing the DINESERV model in their operations, need to pay particular attention to this factor. On the other hand, research by Jain (2013) suggests that price forms part of the 7Ps in the Marketing Mix and plays a vital role in the marketing of eateries which is known to guide and attract customers to purchase a product or service.

After careful analysis and scrutiny of both models discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the DINESERV model is believed to be the ideal model to be used in the analysis of this paper as it has been proven to be used extensively in the measurement of service quality in various diners and eatery settings all around the world. This therefore justifies the adoption of this model in this study.

2.3 The Customer

A customer is any individual who purchases an organization's products or services (Kendall, 2006). Customers are intangible assets and form the foundation of every business. As such, their expectations of a service must be met in every patronage situation to retain active customers and attract new ones (Gupta, Lehmann & Stuart, 2004). Customers can be classified into internal or external customers and further classified into various segments depending on the organization.

In an eatery, an internal customer may be the Chef who is part of the organizational unit. On the other hand, an external customer may be any individual purchasing food from the eatery who is not a part of the organizational unit of the eatery. Internal customers may be classified based on their departments in the organization and external customers may be classified based on their age, geographical location, taste and preferences among others (Neild, 2002).

Customers have several needs which drive their decision to purchase a product or service from an organization. Since external customers have several differential segments in their classification, employees need to be skilled in order to treat each customer exclusively, based on their needs (Schmitt, 2010). For instance, external customers

classified by age can have separate segments further classified into children, adults or elderly people. In this instance, children have special needs distinct from elderly people and must be treated accordingly.

With an ever-growing technological and competitive market, customers have become very circumspect in their quest for better service providers. This has therefore informed their search for organizations that will provide them with good service and offer them value for their money. Customer Value plays a fundamental role in the success of any business and eateries are no exception (Weinstein, 2016). Superior Customer Value refers to the process where an organization crafts experiences that continuously exceed the expectations of the customer (Weinstein, 2016). This subject of Superior Customer Value is vital to this study as it forms the foundation for exceeding customer's expectations of a service. Organizations that offer superior customer value consequently build a network of lifetime customers; that is, customers that remain loyal to the organization despite new and similar organisations in that market. Customer Value is linked to Assurance in the SERVQUAL model as employees are expected to consistently remind customers of the value the service provider is delivering. This is very essential in building organisations because it helps them to improve the success of the brand, build customer loyalty, improve the quality of their services and better understand customer decisions among other factors (McFarlane, 2013).

2.4 Customer Service

In the words of a very renowned customer service professional, Kaufman (2012), there exists a two-fold upheaval in human life that is difficult to comprehend. The first is

the inability of organizations to provide consistent services that satisfy and exceed customers' expectation and the second is the complaints of service providers concerning their dislike for their jobs. Customer service is thus a service encounter performed by an organization aimed at meeting the needs and expectations of customers (Kendall, 2006).

Customer Service benefits both the organization and the employee exhibiting good customer service. With regard to the employees, good customer service will enable them to be more content at work. This is because an effect of good customer service is that one's colleagues will begin to treat him or her with utmost respect which will boost the employee's morale and desire to do more for the organization. Another benefit to the employee is that he or she will be able to demonstrate good time management skills which is linked to the tangibles dimension in the SERVQUAL model associated with the qualities of personnel in service organizations. This is because that employee will not spend working hours dealing with an unsatisfied customer due to the exhibition of poor customer service but will rather be working hard towards the accomplishment of his or her daily goals for the organization. With regard to the business, customer service leads to high profitability as customers that are delighted with the service will want to re-purchase. This will also lead to positive word of mouth which will in turn attract new customers and lead to an increment in the income of the organization. A study by Newby & McManus (2002) reveals that good customer service is also very cost-efficient as organizations will not focus on correcting mistakes associated with poor customer service but will channel their efforts towards exceeding customers' expectations.

Vaughan (2011) conducted an investigation into customer expectations and discovered that there are three key strategies by which an organization can exceed the

expectations of its customers and create a “win-win” situation during each service encounter. These strategies include defining future prospects of the business, defining the accomplishment of the business’ goals with clients and finally, defining outputs of the business. These three key strategies are not emphasized by the SERVQUAL and DINESERV model but are however very essential to businesses who want to practice excellent customer service. A strategic factor that a business can use in exceeding customers’ expectations is defining future prospects of the business such that customers will be aware when the business has overdelivered and will therefore trust them to deliver astounding results in another service encounter (Vaughan , 2011). Regarding defining the accomplishment of the business’ goals with clients, if a business does not know what their customers define as an accomplishment, they will find it difficult meeting their customers’ expectations (Vaughan , 2011). Lastly, defining the outputs of the business will also allow the customer to draw a mental picture of the final product prior to the output yet to be delivered and leave customers delighted with the final service delivered.

In recent times, Strategic Customer Service has become one of the major building blocks of successful businesses all around the world. An exploration by Goodman (2019) unveiled six key concepts that are useful in understanding the essence of Strategic Customer Service to a business. The SERVQUAL and DINESERV models offer a framework for measuring the quality of customer service but do not provide a structure to explain the essence of customer service to employees, which will in turn inform their behavior. These concepts are grievances, glitches, loyalty, amusement, contentment and word of mouth and will enlighten employees about the importance of customer service.

A glitch refers to any malfunction that ensues from a customer using a product or accessing a service. A grievance occurs when a customer makes a decision to draw the attention of the service provider to this glitch via any form of media communication such as email or phone call (Michel, Bowen & Johnston, 2008). Contentment arises when customers' expectations are met, and loyalty is measured when a customer expresses an intention to repurchase the product or service from the business. Amusement occurs when the business or service provider exceeds the expectations of the customer (Torres & Kline, 2013). This further leads to a positive word of mouth that may be a remark about the quality of service exhibited by the business. Nevertheless, it is important to note that service providers can under-deliver on the service that they promise their customers, which can lead to negative word of mouth and be very toxic for the business.

Customer Service thrives in an environment that is customer-focused and as such, businesses have adopted customer-focused strategies to help keep themselves abreast of their customers' needs despite the ever-evolving economic environment caused by the introduction of technology and changes in the market (Vance, 2006). Employees who directly engage with customers, therefore have the tasks of implementing these customer-focused strategies to provide services that exceed the customers' expectations. The SERVQUAL and DINESERV models again, do not accentuate the need for customer focus in all dimensions but only in the dimensions, Empathy and Responsiveness. This strategy is therefore a necessity for excellent customer service in eateries. Additionally, the employees of eateries take up customer service jobs. Customer Service Jobs can be classified into three segments which are managerial support, individual or private services such as hairstyling and finally, business transactions (Vance, 2006). These

segments portray the broad dimensions of customer service jobs and the level of interactions that are required from employees in these various segments.

Exceptional Customer Service can be measured using several indicators.

Nonetheless, alignment, setting benchmarks, internal standards as well as motivation and reward systems for employees were considered in this study (Vance, 2006). Alignment is the focus or direction of the business. Organizations that are customer-focused need to discover the segment of customer focus in which they find themselves and work towards delivering excellent service as expected by the customers in that segment (Vance, 2006). Benchmarks serve as an index for measuring the quality of customer service and this helps organizations to manage processes and measure performance of employees (Tucker & Pitt, 2010). This will ensure that employees are held accountable for their actions with respect to customer service and will also ensure that the company is on track towards attaining high profitability and success. Internal standards within the organization may also be used in measuring customer service as employees can brainstorm the needs of customers due to frequent interactions with them and be able to measure customers' level of satisfaction in relation to that need. Lastly, a study by Inghilleri & Solomon (2010) revealed that motivation and reward systems for employees is an essential factor in measuring customer service, as the employees play an equally significant role in the service experience as the customers do. Organizations need to put systems in place to reward employees as a way to thank them for helping the organization to attain their goals which will in turn motivate them to replicate exceptional customer service.

2.5 Customer Service in Eateries

The implementation of a customer service strategy in an eatery provides the setting within which the needs of their customers can be met as well as to afford customers an exceptional banqueting experience. Customer Service is very crucial to the success of eateries and this is because it helps the eatery to build a good reputation (Chang, 2013). When an eatery offers good customer service, customers are willing to patronize as well as repurchase the product or service being rendered. This further leads to positive word of mouth in the form of recommendations to other customers and thereby builds a wider customer base and most likely, increased gains. Customer Loyalty is another benefit that eateries can enjoy if they practice good customer service (Hill & Alexander, 2017). There is no denying that any food service business will be pleased if customers remain loyal to the service they provide and trust them to be reliable in service delivery as emphasised by the reliability dimension of the DINESERV model.

An investigation by Hill & Alexander (2017) established that there are several factors that affect the provision and maintenance of optimal customer service standards in eateries. This segment relating to provision and maintenance of customer service, forms a vital part of this study as it will help eateries to restructure as well as put measures in place to ensure provision and maintenance of optimal customer service standards. This review will however focus on three of the factors, namely consistency in service delivery, speed of service as well as quality checks and attention to detail. It is very important to note that the DINESERV model provides a criterion for measuring service quality in eateries and diners, yet it fails to highlight the dimensions that house the factors that aid service providers in maintaining optimal customer service in their eateries.

Conceptual to consistency in service delivery, mistakes are inevitable, and employees need to realize that honesty is the hallmark of excellence in customer service. Hence, when such mistakes occur, customers need to be informed immediately. Businesses, however, need to put measures in place to ensure consistency in service and ensure errors are at the barest minimum in order not to compromise the organization's standards. Speed of service is critical in eateries as no customer would like to wait long hours to purchase food, bearing in mind that there are several alternatives (Hill & Alexander, 2017). Also, no customer enjoys lukewarm food, thus eateries need to pay close attention to their speed in service delivery as it can drive them upwards or downwards the ladder of excellent customer service. Finally, quality checks and attention to detail require a mastery of interpersonal skills and employees need to develop these skills in order to fully operationalize this element. Employees must be able to decipher the moods of customers based on their body language and speech, and also be knowledgeable about the products and services the eatery offers to avoid displeasing impatient customers who may end up being loyal customers to the eatery.

Various industries have diverse measurements of customer service (Unit, 2010). For eateries, which fall in the hospitality industry, each of them has a specific criterion for measuring the impact of customer service in improving their success and profitability. Some of the measurements of customer service that several eateries around the world use include a point of sale (POS) system and this helps to track sales regularly such as bi-weekly or monthly to determine if the eateries' sales have been positively affected by practicing good customer service (Babić-Hodović, Arslanagić-Kalajdžić & Banda, 2015). Another measurement used is collecting feedback from customers. Research by Wilson,

Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler (2016) disclosed that gathering feedback from customers is essential in the service delivery process as it will help the eateries to finetune their service delivery to meet the growing demands and expectations of their customers. The best way to find out what customers want, is to ask them directly.

The theory of statistical discrimination reveals that individuals tend to classify others based on visible attributes and further use this as a factor in identifying the social group they may belong to (Fang & Moro, 2011). Research by Brewster (2012) showed that there are two ways that service providers identify these groups of customers; these are revenue-based and cost-based deductions. Revenue-based approaches rely on the generosity of customers especially in the giving of tips to waiters or waitresses who take note of them and in turn offer them preferential treatment. On the other hand, cost-based deductions are geared towards the cost incurred in serving particular customers as compared to others (Brewster, 2012). For instance, if a server notices a particular table is difficult to serve because of the caliber of people on the table, he or she makes a mental note of the table as a waste of time hence, a cost rather than profit to the eatery.

Customer Service is important in eateries because a study by Pariyar (2014) has shown that customer service is inherent in defining what a good eatery is. A good eatery has certain characteristics that set it apart from other eateries. One of them is the practice of good customer service (Newby & McManus, 2002). In an eatery, there are certain values of customer service that employees need to pay attention to; a positive attitude towards customers is the first (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Employees must be reminded that “The customer is king” thus, regardless of the difficulty that may be associated with serving a particular customer, care must be taken not to offend the

customer with bad attitudes from employees. Hygiene is another value and forms a crucial part of the requirements of a good restaurant and measures need to be put in place to ensure that regulations in the restaurant on cleanliness, proper disposal of garbage and sanitation are adhered to by all employees (Aksoydan, 2007).

2.6 Eatery Improvement Policies

In order for the profitability and success of eateries to be maintained over a long period of time, eateries need to be abreast of the concerns and changing demands of customers. An investigation by Green (2015) revealed that about 50% of customers do not complain when they encounter a problem, and this emphasizes the necessity of good customer service in eateries. There are several policies that eateries can implement in order to improve their customer service delivery. The first policy is accessibility (Green, 2015). Employees' accessibility to customers is essential in delivering good customer service and several eateries do not have this policy implemented in their organizational culture, thus making it difficult for customers to give constructive feedback on service delivery. One strategy an eatery can use to implement the policy of accessibility is providing waiters, waitresses, chef and managers with name tags to make them easily approachable and welcoming to customers. This will then encourage customers to direct their complaints or feedback to a name instead of keeping it to themselves.

Table management is another eatery improvement policy that eateries can implement in order to serve their customers better. Long waiting times are one of the cankers to customer satisfaction with service delivery. Effective Table management is a solution to this problem, and it refers to the process of meticulously managing restaurant table capacity vis-a-vis waiting times of customers in order to ensure that a server has

been assigned to each table and customers are satisfied with the service they receive in the end (Hwang, 2008). When an eatery practices effective table management, customers who visit the eatery, will always have a place to sit especially when the eatery uses a reservation system (Hendrickson, 2016). This will therefore encourage customers to keep visiting the eatery and the more customers visit, the more income the eatery generates.

One very important eatery improvement policy that is usually overlooked in service industries as well as several eateries is customer service training (Brown, 2013). In most eateries, employees are made aware of the basic requirements that are needed to relate with customers as well as the rules and regulations of the organization. However, employers do not organize regular customer service training sessions for their employees to help correct flaws in service delivery and also update them on innovative ways of dealing with the customers of this modern day. For customer service training, one of the most essential topics that employers must address, is communication skills (Dougherty, 2015) This includes training in politeness and eatery etiquette and the negotiation of non-verbal cues including facial expressions dressing and body language in response to service delivery (Abu-ELSamen, Akroush, Al-Khawaldeh & Al-Shibly, 2011). This is because good communication skills are the building block of building rapport with customers which will lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the long run.

Another eatery policy is confidence building and the “Buddy System” is an excellent way to achieve this (Cairncross, Wilde & Hutchinson, 2008). In an eatery, the “Buddy System” refers to the principle of being each other’s keeper with respect to attending and relating to customers and meticulousness in service delivery. It can also be used to help calm tensions amongst employees who encounter bad experiences with

certain customers, leaving them derailed for the rest of the day or their shift for the day. The “Buddy System” will therefore provide an avenue for employees to be able to lean on someone when they are experiencing hard times at work, building a sense of togetherness amongst employees in the eatery, thus serving as a motivation for productive work, which underscores the importance of relationship management in eateries (Ryu & Lee, 2017).

2.7 Factors Affecting Customer’s Selection of Eateries

There are several factors that inform a customers’ selection of an eatery. Some of these factors include customer service, price, food quality, service quality and physical environment. Relevant literature on this subject dominantly assert the centrality of customer service among the factors that determine customers’ choice of eateries, and the review in this section reveals this lopsided attention to customer service, which is rightly the focus of this study. Pacheco (2018) contends that quality customer service has competitive advantage for eateries, and that coupled with food quality, they contribute greatly to overall customer satisfaction. An investigation by Tinne (2012) disclosed that staff behavior ranked high in the selection criteria of customers in Dhaka City. Staff behavior refers to the attitude of employees or staff towards customers in an eatery (Tinne, 2012). Eatery staff, especially waiters and waitresses, and sales attendants, must be knowledgeable in the affairs of their eateries. For instance, they should know the various dishes and food ingredients that the eatery offers so that they can better inform and guide customers in their choices (Kincaid, Baloglu, Mao & Busser, 2010). Staff are

at the front lines of most service industries, especially eateries, hence, the ability of staff to exhibit good customer service is essential in retaining customers.

Farahiyan, Kaptan & Jadhavar (2015) and Freehill-Maye (2019) highlight an aspect of customer service that received no attention in the theoretical discussion and this is delivery service. Generally, delivery services are an essential component of customer service as customers like to use the services of a delivery person because of its convenience among other factors. An organization that offers delivery services for its products or services, creates an avenue for profitability as this service is frequently used by customers. Freehill-Maye (2019) observes that it even eliminates security risks that customers may be concerned about, thereby satisfying their customers.

2.8 The Customer's Perception of Service Quality

Customer Perceived Service Quality can be defined as the difference between a customer's expectation of service quality and a customer's perception of the service based on factors contributing towards the final output of the service (Sumaedi, Bakit & Metasari, 2011). A customer's perception of service quality has a direct impact on their satisfaction with the service, which in turn affects patronage and repurchase, and hence needs to be given a desirable amount of attention. It is, nevertheless, important to note that when expectations are bigger than performance, perceived quality is considered to be below satisfaction and this in turn causes customer dissatisfaction (du Plessis, 2016).

An organization's ability to manage the perceptions of their customers is key in making profits in their short-term plan of action. An investigation by Brock (2009) revealed that there are five fundamental strategies that organizations need to implement

to help manage customer perceptions of service quality. One of the five strategies is benchmarks. These organizational standards guide employees to present a consistent message to customers in order to manage their perceptions (Tucker & Pitt, 2010).

Recording of data is another vital strategy in managing perceptions as employees that have direct contact with customers need to be critical in noting all techniques associated with service delivery as proposed by the customer. This helps in delivering the same service specifications in another service encounter and ensure customer satisfaction.

Acceleration processes, the third strategy, is concerned with dealing with unexpected delays and distractions in the service processes to meet the needs and expectations of the customer. This has an impact on the credibility of the organization as the customer will trust the organization to deliver regardless of any difficulty and will thus, lead to positive word of mouth (Kantsperger & Kunz , 2010). Unlisted benchmarks are unwritten organizational standards that are used in severe unexpected mishaps in service encounters and are available to specific individuals who are part of the management of an organization (Brock, 2009). These unlisted benchmarks are to guide the call to action when critical decisions about service delivery need to be taken and executed. Conclusively, warranties will help keep employees on their toes to deliver the best service to their customers and it will also help manage perceptions of service quality because all questions or doubts associated with the effectiveness or quality of service delivery, will be addressed in the warranty (Mok, Sparks & Kadampully, 2013).

Perceived Service Quality is believed to have a direct influence on the revenue of an organization which also has a sequential impact on profitability hence requires the meticulous attention of employees (Townsend & Gebhardt, 2019). In a study conducted

by Dabholkar (2015), he reveals that customer participation is also a vital strategy that plays a key role in managing perceptions of customers concerning the quality of service delivered by organizations. Customer participation is thus a behavioral concept that refers to the extent to which a customer is involved in the production and delivery of a service (Dong, Sivakumar, Evans & Zou, 2015).

Aside managing perceptions, customer participation also helps to improve service quality in organizations and enhance productivity. This is because both customers and employees will play a role in service delivery; hence time will not be wasted resolving customers' complaints or issues. Self-service is a form of customer participation and this is beneficial because it reduces the cost of hiring new or more employees (Heinonen, Helkkula, Holmlund-Rytkönen, Mustak, Jaakkola & Halinen, 2013). For instance, in an eatery where a buffet is served for all mealtimes, that is, breakfast, lunch and dinner, hiring staff to man and serve at each mealtime will not be necessary. However, allowing customers to serve themselves, the quantity of food that will satisfy them, will be ideal as a way of involving them in the process of service delivery.

Furthermore, Dabholkar (2015) additionally discloses that there are two modules of customer participation. The first module is concerned with customers performing the service themselves and this can only occur if the customer is willing to participate in the service production process. The second module is the customer's ability and willingness to acquire service-related information to aid in service delivery. The heart of customer participation lies in the willingness of the customer to participate in the production and delivery process of the service. Hence, acquiring information to be able to fully participate is essential to the success of service delivery.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to investigate whether customer service plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students and whether a student's perception of bad or good customer service quality affects their decision in choosing an eatery. This chapter lays emphasis on the research design as well as the methods and tools that were used in the collection and analysis of the data that was gathered. It also provides information on the data sources, sampling procedure, research instruments and variables employed in this study. Furthermore, it presents data necessary for the analysis of the null and alternate hypothesis which include;

H₀ - There is no relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

H₁- There is a relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

Finally, it addresses the challenges encountered in the process of carrying out this study.

3.2 Scope of the Study

The target population for the research is students in Ashesi University. Data on the target population were obtained from the Academic Registry Office of Ashesi University. The data set included a detailed breakdown of the number of males, females, Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian students in each year group and the programs that they offer. It also included statistics to help calculate the percentages of fee paying and non-fee paying students as well as other data relevant for this study.

3.3 Research Design

This study used a mixed method approach. Mixed method approach is a method of conducting research that involves the collection, analysis and integration of qualitative and quantitative research in a single (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research refers to the kind of research that seeks to discover the human element in a situation (Given, 2015). This research method makes use of experiences and opinions of respondents in answering research questions. Quantitative research on the other hand refers to the kind of research that is associated with enumerative induction which seeks to discover the number of individuals in the general population that have a particular characteristic to individuals in the sample population (Brannen, 2017). These procedures are ideal because the research aimed to gather data on the experiences and opinions of students on campus to help construct meaningful conclusions about the research questions as well as the hypotheses. The study also used a thematic research design to explain and give preeminence to the variables that are relevant to be able to understand the purpose of the study.

Using a thematic research design helped to explain in-depth, the variables in the research questions that are relevant for this study. Two research tools, questionnaire and interview, were employed for this study. The questionnaire was administered to the students in the form of an online survey using Google Forms. The interview design was used to gather data from the staff at the various eateries in this study.

3.3.1 Research Variables

The specific variables used include perceived service quality, eateries in Ashesi University as well as the dimensions that form part of the SERVQUAL and DINESERV

models namely: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, price and satisfaction as elaborated in the literature review section of the study.

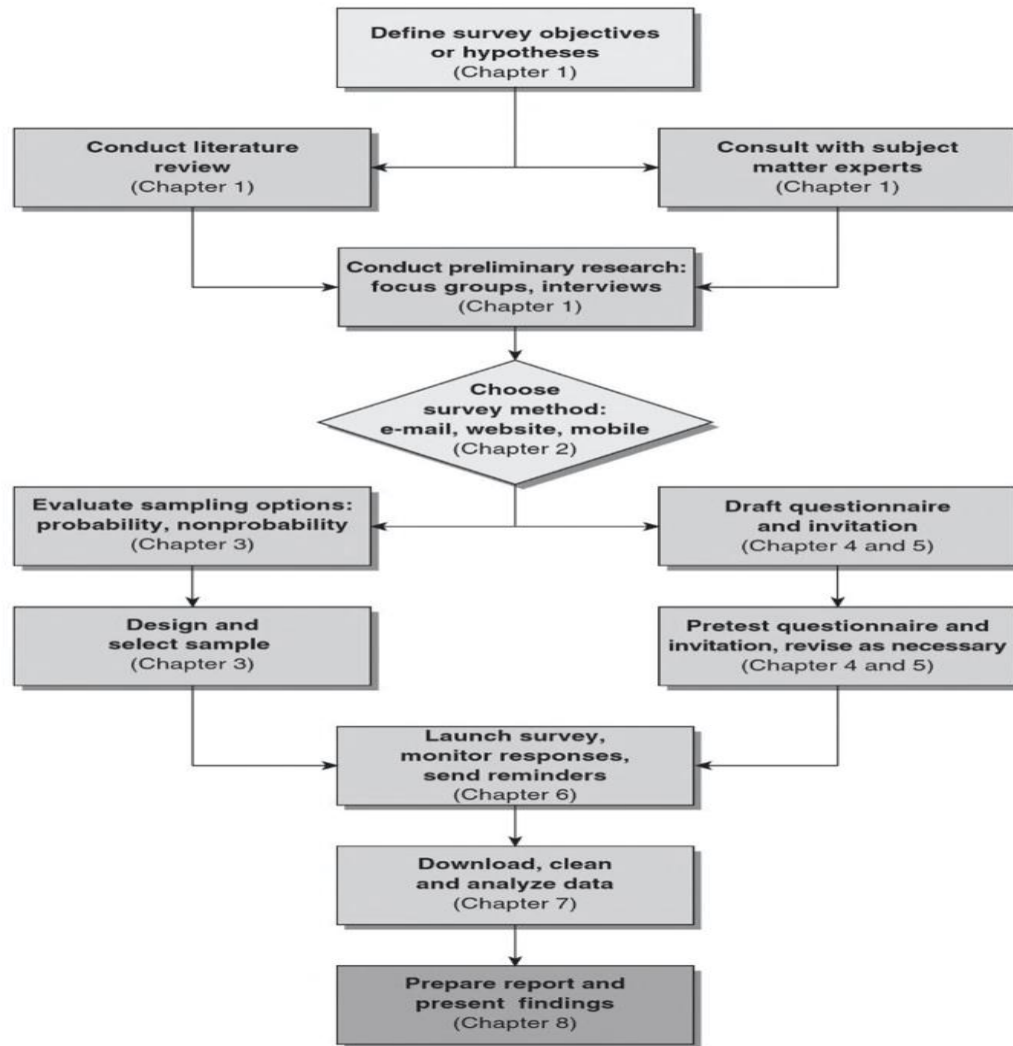
3.3.2 Data Sources

Primary data from the online survey and interviews were employed in this study. These sources were used because they would provide the relevant first-hand data required for this study. Secondary data sources were also employed to support data gathered using the primary research instruments. Literature in the form of journal articles, reports, textbooks and other internet sources were utilised as secondary data sources.

3.3.2.1 Online Survey

An online survey is a data collection tool which is widely known to be a method used in quantitative research. Google Forms was the type of online survey employed for this study. The google forms were distributed to the student body via social media platforms such as Whatsapp as well as via email. Additionally, the forms were incorporated into a QR code and pasted on a designated notice board. This allowed students to easily scan the code and fill the form. Research by Sue & Ritter (2012) reveal the steps that a researcher must take in order to fully benefit from the online survey method of data collection, as seen in figure 1 below.

Some of the steps outlined in figure 1 were also utilised in the conduct of the online survey for this study. The stratified sampling option was chosen, after which a draft of the questionnaire was drawn and previewed. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted and feedback was requested from respondents if they had any, before the launch of the survey.

Figure 1.1 Survey Research Process Flow*Figure 1. Online Survey Research Flow*

Source: (Sue & Ritter, 2012)

3.3.2.2 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

A semi-structured interview is one of the types of interviews used in qualitative research that usually follows certain specific questions set out in an interview guide by the interviewer. Additionally, the interviewer allows the interviewees to follow their own thought patterns thereby allowing for the interview to unfold in a conversational style,

throwing light on details that are important to the interviewees (Longhurst, 2003). This was also evident during the course of the semi-structured interviews of the current study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for a number of the staff from the various eateries, with most of the departments in each eatery represented.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analysed using the mixed method approach. For the qualitative analysis, case study was used as the method of analysis, as a detailed report was written thematically on each eatery based on the responses and opinions transcribed from the data. Furthermore, a quantitative analysis of the hypotheses was done using the Chi-Square Test to measure the relationship between those variables and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

$$\chi^2_c = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

The formula above is the Chi-Square function; where ‘O’ is the observed value, ‘E’ is the expected value and ‘i’ is the ith position in the table (Zibran, 2007).

3.5 Sampling Size And Technique

The population size of Ashesi University students is 1,173 and a representative sample of this population is approximately 300 students with a margin of error of +/- 5% (Conroy, 2015). For this study, the stratified sampling procedure was based on the nationality and the year group of students out of which eight (8) strata obtained. These eight (8) strata include: Seniors (Class of 2020) further divided into Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaians, Juniors (Class of 2021) further divided into Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaians, Sophomores

(Class of 2022) further divided into Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaians and Freshmen (Class of 2023) further divided into Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaians. The analysis of the data was done qualitatively and presented in the form of case studies. Case study was employed because the data related to the opinions and experiences of the students.

Table 1

Stratified Sampling Procedure

YEAR GROUP/NATIONALITY	GHANAIAN	NON-GHANAIAN
FRESHMAN	69	16
SOPHOMORES	66	14
JUNIORS	57	9
SENIORS	57	11

Source: 2019/2020 Academic Year Statistical Report, Academic Registry, Ashesi University, 2019

3.6 Description of Participants

The participants used in this study are students, the proprietors of the various eateries as well as a sample of the staff of the various eateries. The students included Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian students from all four levels of students in the school. The staff mostly interact with the students, hence their input was essential to the study and finally the proprietors are the people in charge who address all issues concerning the activities of the eatery, hence their opinion and experience were vital for providing an accurate representation of the data gathered.

3.7 Ethical Concerns

The Institutional Review Board of Ashesi University reviewed and approved the research proposal for this study as well as the procedures the researcher used in conducting the study. Additionally, the researcher sought full consent of all participants in the survey and disclosed to the participants their right to opt out of the survey or terminate the interview if they wished.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a descriptive and quantitative analysis of findings which were obtained through data collected from the online survey and semi-structured interviews to aid in the answering of the research questions and the hypothesis. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the significance of customer service in the choice of eatery of Ashesi University students.

The survey accepted responses from respondents over a 21-day period to be able to gather the relevant information needed for the study. Additionally, the researcher organized an event dubbed “Sip and Fill” in a bid to reach the representative sample required of this study. The event involved distributing a free cup of cold drink at a stationary stand surrounded by music to draw the attention of students passing by in the hope of encouraging them to fill the online survey. This event was successful with respondents rising from 200 to 300 students within the five-hour period of the event. A total of 317 respondents answered the online survey.

The results established from conducting the online survey showed that a majority of the respondents were Ghanaian, occupying 83.5% of the total respondents. A diverse pool of responses was also obtained from non-Ghanaian students, representing 26.5%. Results further showed that 94.5% of respondents had eaten from all three major eateries on campus and as such, could provide insights based on their diverse experiences.

A total of nine semi-structured interviews were conducted across the three major eateries discussed in this study. A number of staff from each eatery were randomly selected based on their availability at the time of the interview. Each staff member was

interviewed for approximately 20-30 minutes with their consent and the interviewer explained the details of the consent form to them prior to the interview.

The first seven semi-structured interviews occurred in one day. However, the remaining two interviews were conducted on separate days due to the unavailability of the staff from those eateries. The semi-structured interviews were conducted solely for the staff of the various eateries to able to get an in-depth understanding of their perspective based on some of the factors that fall under the dimensions drawn from the DINESERV model.

4.2 Preliminary Analysis

This section contains an examination of the first two sections of the online survey namely consent and demographics. This was to help give context to this study and aid in the analysis of the individual cafeteria case studies.

4.2.1 *Consent*

Out of 317 respondents that took part in the online survey, 307 respondents willingly agreed to be a part of the online survey by selecting “Yes” when the survey requested their consent. On the other hand, 10 respondents selected “No” and were redirected to a “Thank You” page which acknowledged their expression of interest in the survey and then allowed them to proceed to submit the form. Thus, 96.8% of the total number of respondents expressed a genuine willingness to take part in the online survey.

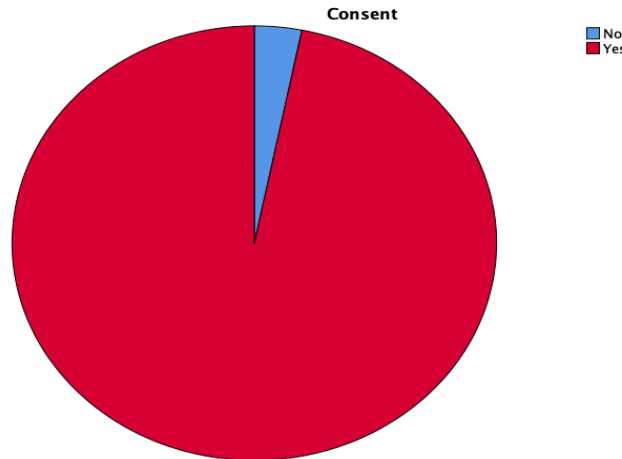


Figure 2. Pictorial View of Consent Responses

4.2.2 Demographics

Demographics play a fundamental role in the analysis of surveys. In this study, the two features of demographics that were considered were the year groups of the respondents as well as their nationality as these were relevant in obtaining a representative sample across the student body, using the Stratified Sampling approach.

4.2.2.1 Year Group

There are four year groups that make up the Ashesi University student population. The first years (2023), the sophomores (2022), the juniors (2021) and the seniors (2020). Based on the sampling approach employed for this study, a sample was obtained from a number of students across these year groups in order to aid the research process. Out of a total of 307 respondents, the class with the highest number of respondents was the class of 2022 with 92 respondents and the class of 2021 recorded the least with 60 respondents. Also, the class of 2020 and 2023 had 74 and 81 respondents respectively. The section for

year groups in the demographics of the survey was very important as it helped to determine if the sample estimated for each year group or class had been reached.

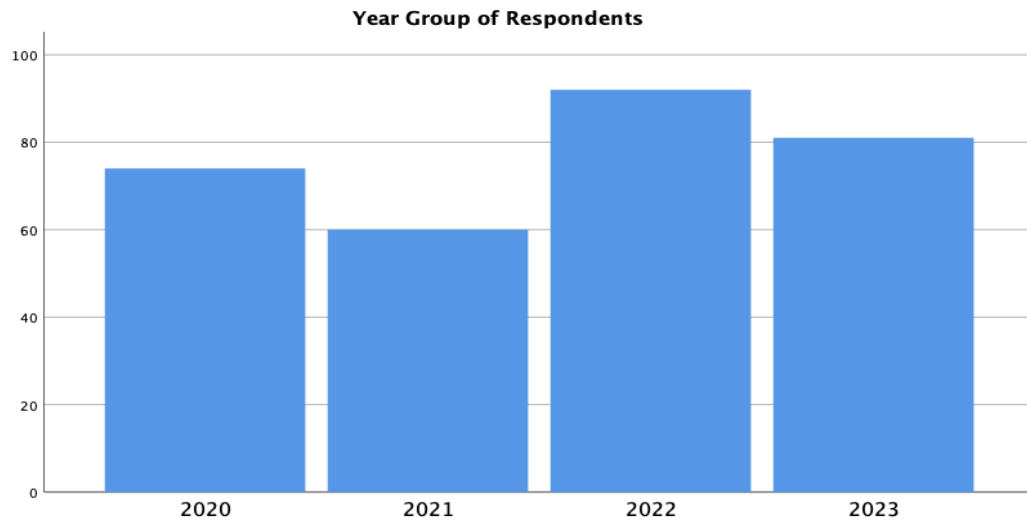


Figure 3. Graph of Year Groups

4.2.2.2 Nationality

The nationality of each respondent was essential in determining whether both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian students were fully represented per the estimated sample drawn in Table 2. At the end of the survey, there were 269 Ghanaian respondents and 38 non-Ghanaian respondents. The estimated target for the number of non-Ghanaian respondents was not reached however, the number of respondents that participated in the survey was more than half of the total estimation (50) across year groups.

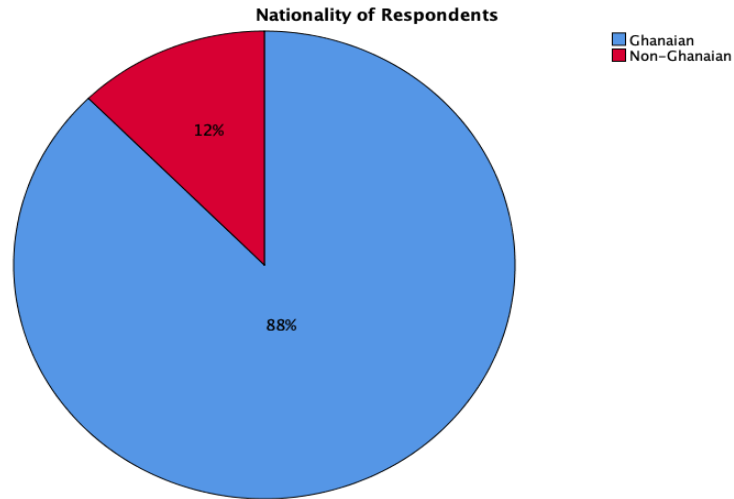


Figure 4. Nationality of Respondents

4.2.3 Patronage of All Three Eateries

This section provides a detailed analysis of the preferred eateries of respondents who answered “Yes” to having eaten at all three eateries, respondents who answered “No” to having eaten at all three eateries and finally, the eatery that respondents did not prefer of the three that were analyzed throughout the study. Out of the 307 respondents who gave consent and completed the online survey, 290 respondents selected the option, “Yes” to having eaten at all three eateries and 17 respondents selected the option, “No” to having eaten at all three eateries. The focus of this analysis is based on the respondents that chose the option, “Yes” to having eaten at all three eateries. However, relevant insights can be drawn from the respondents that chose the option, “No” as they were further asked to choose their preferred eatery out of the eateries they had been to and also indicate the eatery they have never visited and their reason for non-patronage.

4.2.3.1 Preferred Eatery of Respondents Who Have Patronised All Three Eateries

Akornor Cafeteria, Big Ben Cafeteria and Lynes Cafeteria were the three cafeterias that were surveyed and analyzed for this study. Respondents were asked to select their most preferred eatery. After careful examination of the data collected, results showed that Akornor Cafeteria was the most preferred eatery of the 3, closely followed by Lynes Cafeteria then Big Ben Cafeteria. It is however important to note that Lynes Cafeteria was the second most preferred eatery of students by a very little margin from Big Ben Cafeteria.

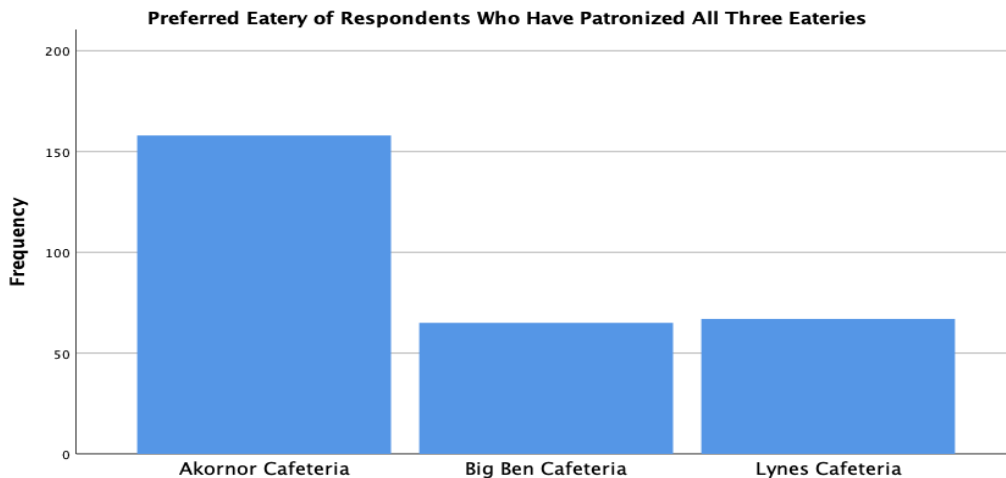


Figure 5. Bar Chart of Preferred Eatery of Respondents Who Have Patronised All Three Eateries

4.2.4 Non-Patronage of All Three Eateries

Seventeen (17) respondents indicated that they had not patronised all the three major eateries discussed in this study. These respondents were then asked which eatery they had not eaten from and further asked to select the reasons why they had not eaten from this eatery. 12 out of the total of 17 respondents who had not been to all three eateries indicated that they had not patronised Lynes Cafeteria. For Akornor Cafeteria

and Big Ben Cafeteria, 1 respondent and 4 respondents respectively had not visited these eateries. With regards to their reasons for non-patronage, 4 respondents chose the option, *unfavorable proximity to lecture hall or hostel* as their reason for non-patronage of a particular eatery. An additional 4 respondents chose *bad customer service*, 1 respondent chose *poor food quality* and the remaining 8 respondents who selected the option, *Other*, provided responses that ranged from “I am loyal to a particular eatery” and “I do not have any reason for non-patronage” among other similar responses.

4.2.4.1 Preferred Eatery of Respondents Who Have Not Patronised All Three Eateries

Seventeen (17) respondents indicated that they had not patronised all the three major eateries discussed in this study. These respondents were further asked to select the eatery they preferred of those eateries they had previously patronised. An analysis of the data revealed that of the 17 respondents, 11 respondents prefer Akornor Cafeteria, 4 respondents prefer Big Ben Cafeteria and 2 respondents prefer Lynes Cafeteria. This again highlights that Akornor Cafeteria is the most preferred eatery for respondents.

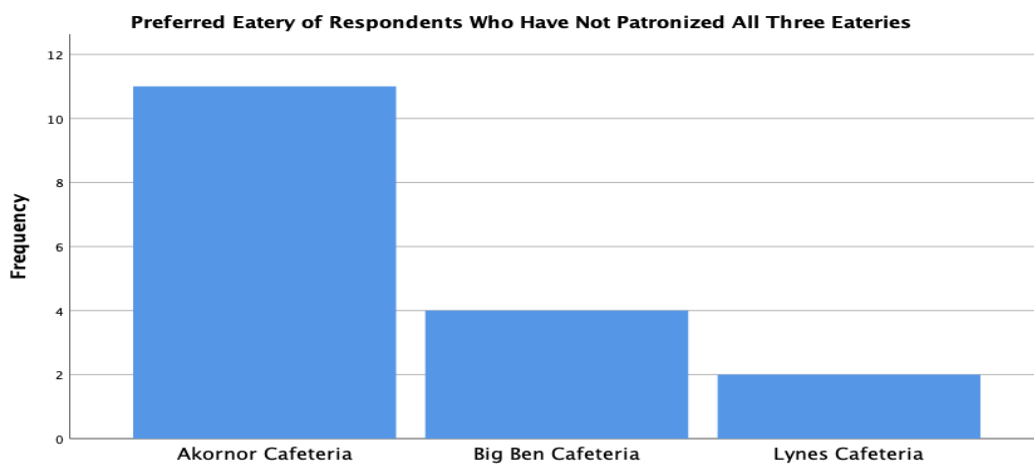


Figure 6. Bar Chart of Preferred Eatery of Respondents Who Have Not Patronised All Three Eateries

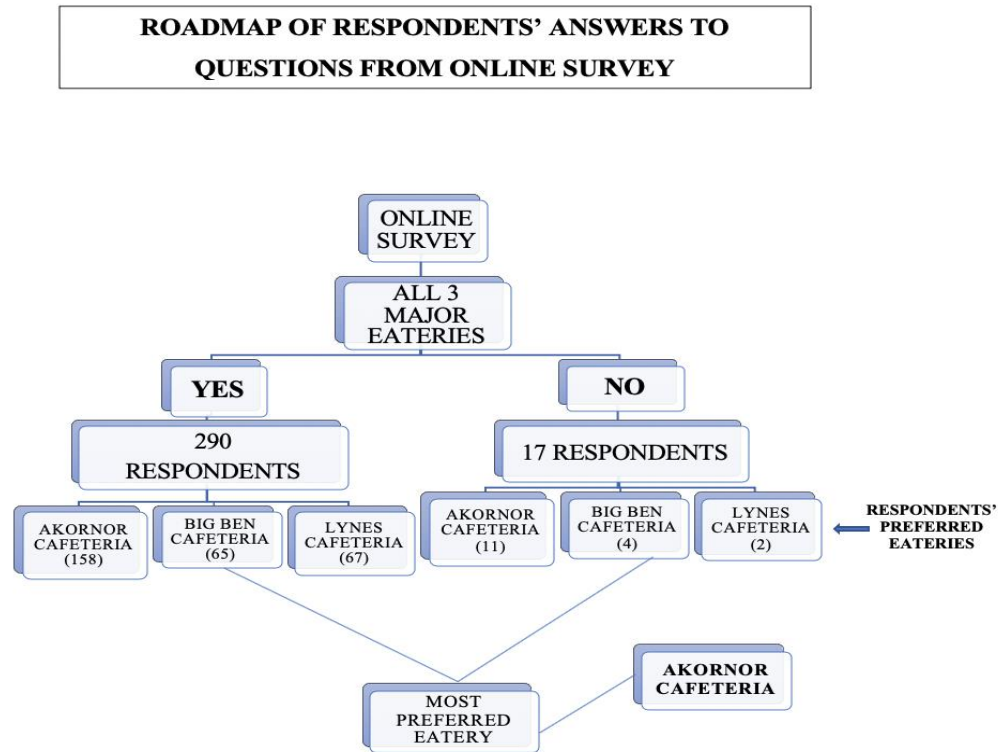


Figure 7. Road map of Online Survey

4.3 Further Analysis

The statistical analysis of the data collected for this study was done using a statistical software known as SPSS which originally meant Statistical Package for the Social Sciences but was changed to Statistical Product and Service Solutions (Pallant & Manual, 2010). This software generated the results for the Chi-Square Test and graphs among other figures and tables pictorially represented in this study.

4.3.1 The Hypothesis

The analysis of the hypothesis of this study was done quantitatively using the Chi-Square Test to establish the relationship between the variables.

Customer service affects consumer buying behavior and has an impact on future patronage (Islam et al., 2018). This statement will therefore be a basis for the following null and alternate hypothesis:

H₀- There is no relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

H₁- There is a relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

The two categorical variables tested were *customer service* and *choice of eatery* and results after the test showed that there is **no** statistically significant relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus. In Chi-square tests, the null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted when the p-value is greater than 0.05 and rejected when the p-value is less than 0.05 (McHugh, 2013). In this study, the p-value recorded was 0.9 thus the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This therefore means that factors other than customer service more markedly influence the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University Campus.

The formula for a Chi-Square Test is :

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Figure 8. Chi-Square Formula

Where ‘O’ is the observed value, ‘E’ is the expected value and ‘i’ is the ith position in the table (Zibran, 2007) . See *Appendix C* for Contingency table.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.374	6	.882
Likelihood Ratio	2.149	6	.905
N of Valid Cases	290		

Figure 9. Chi-Square Test of Hypothesis

4.3.2 The Significance of the Role of Customer Service

Although customer service plays a role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students, it does not play a significant role in which choice of eatery students patronize with respect to the three eateries discussed in this study. The analysis of the data gathered from the respondents revealed that students mainly go to Akornor Cafeteria first because of its proximity, then their customer service and finally their prices. Notwithstanding, a total of 39 respondents chose Akornor Cafeteria as their preferred eatery because of their customer service as opposed to Big Ben Cafeteria and Lynes Cafeteria that recorded 6 and 8 respondents respectively because of their customer service.

With regard to price, 19 respondents chose Akornor because of the price as opposed to Big Ben Cafeteria and Lynes Cafeteria that recorded 2 and 0 respondent(s) respectively. This reveals that students who consider price as a significant factor in choosing an eatery prefer the pricing of Akornor Cafeteria's meals.

Food Quality and Variety recorded the most responses under the section that discussed the respondent's reason for patronage of their preferred eatery. The results revealed that students mainly go to Lynes Cafeteria because of their food quality and variety, with 54 respondents selecting Lynes Cafeteria as their preferred eatery because

of their food quality and variety as opposed to Big Ben Cafeteria and Akornor Cafeteria that recorded 50 and 49 respondents respectively.

Out of a total of 63 respondents that chose Proximity and Delivery Service as their reason for patronage of their preferred eatery, 51 respondents chose Akornor Cafeteria, for its proximity only owing to the fact that they do not run a delivery service, 7 respondents chose Big Ben Cafeteria and finally, 5 respondents chose Lynes Cafeteria as their preferred cafeterias.

Apart from the reasons for patronage namely Customer Service, Food Quality, Price, Proximity and Delivery Service, there was also an option for respondents to select “Other”. Several of the responses under the option “Other”, were very closely related to the above-listed options thus were collapsed during the data analysis and recorded under the respective options. Again, for some of the responses, respondents chose two of the listed options and placed them under the “Other” option. During the analysis, the researcher chose the first option by reason of the order of importance and collapsed the responses that followed in a similar format. Additionally, food variety was an option that was not a part of the listed options; nevertheless, several respondents noted it under the “Other” option hence it was added to the “Food Quality” option and both responses were merged.

Finally, Proximity and Delivery Service were merged because their definitions are closely related. Delivery service is specifically referring to the ability of the eatery to bring your food to your doorstep when you place an order. Proximity on the other hand, refers to how close the eatery is to you. Out of the three eateries discussed in this study, Big Ben Cafeteria is the only cafeteria that runs a delivery service system. Due to this

fact, some of the cells recorded zero responses which affected the analysis, hence the merger of both options to be able to obtain a comprehensive analysis.

In conclusion, the results of this study revealed that Food Quality and Variety play the most significant role in the choice of eatery of students on Ashesi University campus, with the largest number of respondents choosing that option as the reason for patronage of their preferred eatery.

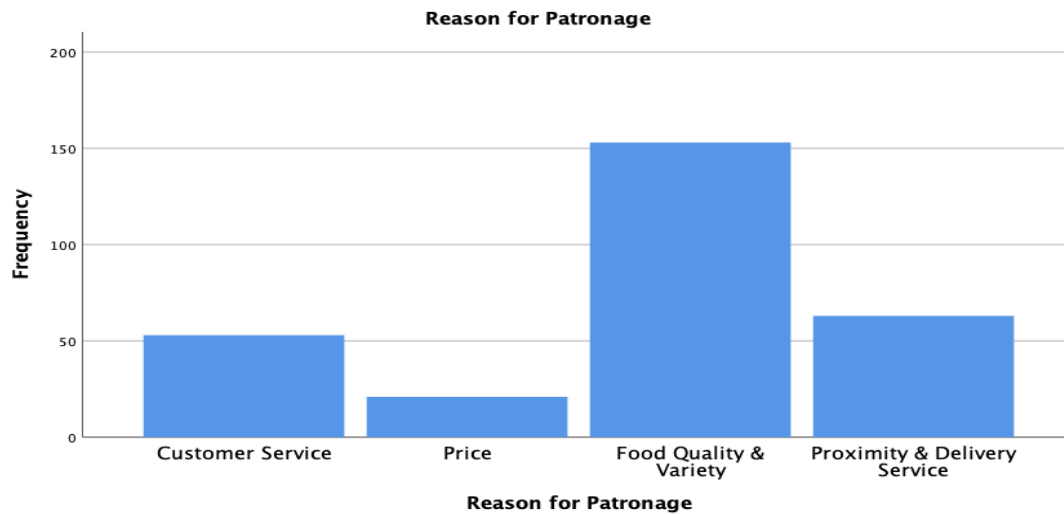


Figure 10. Graph of Reasons for Customers' Choice of Eatery

4.3.3 The Significance of the Role of Customer Perceived Service Quality

Customer Perceived Service Quality can be defined as the difference between a customer's expectation of service quality and a customer's perception of the service based on factors contributing towards the final output of the service (Sumaedi, Bakit & Metasari, 2011). The analysis of this section was based on responses that were collated from respondents who have eaten from all three eateries. Respondents provided varying responses based on the question asked in the survey with respect to this subject. The data was qualitatively analyzed. Similar responses were coded and grouped into relevant

themes and discussed in subsequent paragraphs. The analysis of the data revealed that a student's perception of bad or good customer service quality may not affect their decision in choosing an eatery.

The data for this section was first analyzed solely based on the responses provided on the question of customer perceived service quality and secondly, with respect to the respondents' reasons for patronage of the three eateries analyzed in this study. Most respondents provided contrasting perceptions of service quality in comparison to their reason for patronage. This observation by the researcher played an important role in the analysis of the second objective of this study which sought to determine whether students' perception of bad or good customer service quality did or did not affect their decision in choosing an eatery. Thus, responses for this section of the online survey were categorized into five main themes namely Customer Service (Bad or Good), Food quality and Variety (Good or Poor), Likert-type Scale (Poor, Average, Good or Excellent), No Customer Perceived Service Quality and Null or Invalid themes, based on the respondents' perceptions of service quality. Of a total of 113 responses that fell under the theme Customer Service, 80 indicated good customer service whereas 33 responses indicated their perceived service quality as bad customer service. For the Food Quality and Variety theme, 17 respondents stated good food quality and variety as their customer perceived service quality, with only 5 respondents indicating it as poor food quality and variety among others. With respect to the Likert-type scale theme, 124 respondents were identified across the four options in the Likert Scale. 17 respondents fell under the theme, No Customer Perceived Service Quality. Finally, 14 respondents were categorised under

the theme “Null or Invalid”. In this category, some respondents provided no response, “-(dash) among others.

Below are selected quotes from respondents of the online survey under some of the themes derived from qualitative analysis.

Customer Service: “They had top notch service”; “Their customer service is bad”; “Great customer service, very polite staff.”

Food quality and Variety: “The taste of the food is unique”; “The food quality is less appealing”; “There are always a variety of meals; “I want to be given supplementary dishes as part of the service delivery.”

Likert-type Scale: “Great”; “Poor”; “Average”; “Good”

No Customer Perceived Service Quality: “I have no customer perceived service quality because of the lack of variety in eatery options”; “Not applicable”; “None”

In conclusion, a further analysis showed that 145 respondents provided *contrasting* opinions of their perceptions of service quality vis a vis their reason for patronage that is although a respondent’s reason for patronage was customer service, their perception was that the eatery provides “variety of foods” which falls under a different reason for patronage. On the other hand, 131 respondents provided *similar* opinions of their perceptions of service quality compared to their reason for patronage. For instance, respondents who selected food quality and variety as their reason for patronage, expressed a perception of customer perceived service quality as “the food was great” among such similar responses.

The above analysis therefore showed that a student’s perception of bad or good customer service quality may or may not affect their decision in choosing an eatery.

4.4 Cafeteria Case Studies

In this section, each cafeteria was analyzed based on the responses collected from the various questions that were asked regarding the factors under the dimensions of the DINESERV model. The DINESERV model is made up of 7 dimensions which include; Tangibles, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Satisfaction and Price. Under each dimension in the online survey, four questions based on the factors in that dimension were posed in a bid to gather relevant information for the success of the study.

The responses in this section were collated from respondents who had eaten from all three eateries and had also chosen the various cafeterias analyzed in this study as their most preferred eatery. For each factor under a specific dimension, a Likert scale was used to determine whether respondents totally agreed or totally disagreed with the questions asked, with the scale ranging being from one to five; one being represented as “*totally disagree*”, two represented as “*disagree*”, three represented as “*indifferent*”, four represented as “*agree*” and finally, five which represented “*totally agree*.”

4.4.1 Akornor Cafeteria

The most preferred eatery on Ashesi campus was Akornor Cafeteria, with 158 of the total number of respondents choosing the said cafeteria as their most preferred. Out of 158 respondents, only 39 of them chose Akornor Cafeteria for its customer service. 51 respondents chose Akornor Cafeteria for its proximity and 49 of the respondents preferred Akornor for its food quality and variety. This analysis therefore reveals that the students who patronize Akornor Cafeteria do so because of their proximity to it.

The DINESERV model is an essential model for measuring the quality of service rendered especially at eateries. Respondents who filled the online survey were asked several questions based on the factors discussed under the DINESERV model. The following paragraphs will throw light on the opinions of respondents concerning each factor with regard to Akornor Cafeteria.

Respondents answered questions about the eatery with respect to the equipment used, the use of modern technology, the appearance of the staff as well as their taste experiences under the dimension, *Tangibles* in the DINESERV model. Tangibles in the DINESERV model represents a variety of factors ranging from the physical appearance of staff to the attractiveness of the dining area among others. For Akornor Cafeteria, 59 of the respondents “*agreed*” that the equipment such as the POS and fridges among several others that the cafeteria uses are functional and this option received the most responses out of a total of 158 respondents that chose this cafeteria. 61 of the total of 158 respondents also “*agreed*” that the equipment Akornor Cafeteria uses is abreast of changes in modern technology. With respect to the grooming and appearance of staff, 66 respondents “*agreed*” that the staff at Akornor Cafeteria are well-groomed. Finally, the last question under Tangibles was related to the taste of the variety of food served by Akornor Cafeteria and 56 out of 158 respondents “*agreed*” that the meals of Akornor Cafeteria provides excellent taste experiences. Finally, respondents were pleased with the service Akornor Cafeteria provides under the dimension Tangibles.

The second dimension in the DINESERV model that respondents answered questions to was *Reliability* and the analysis of the data revealed some significant results. 64 respondents “*agreed*” that Akonor Cafeteria keeps their word in delivering what they

promise their customers. 54 respondents were “*indifferent*” about whether Akornor Cafeteria sympathizes with customers when they have problems. This gives an indication about the front-line staff at Akornor Cafeteria and management needs to pay particular attention to their customer relations in the area of addressing customer issues. Many students stated that Akornor Cafeteria was time-conscious and this is largely due to the strategy they use in delivering their service to their customers that is displaying the food that is readily available which helps customers to make their food choices relatively faster. Furthermore, the results of the data collected indicated that 60 respondents “*agreed*” that Akornor Cafeteria was time-conscious in the delivery of their service. Finally, 58 respondents “*agreed*” that the staff at Akornor Cafeteria were polite and this is a plus because most customers tend to be attracted to eateries that treat them with respect thereby increasing the eatery’s chance of future patronage from the customers.

Results from the data collected revealed that the dimension, *Responsiveness* has one of the most consistent ratings for Akornor Cafeteria with the majority of respondents selecting the option, “*agreed*” across the various questions asked under this dimension. 58 respondents, 70 respondents, 64 respondents and 66 respondents chose the option “*agreed*” to Akornor Cafeteria alerting customers of the exact time services will be rendered, the employees providing customers with prompt responses to their questions, the employees showing a willingness to help customers and finally, employees’ ability to answer questions completely, respectively. This therefore reveals that respondents were pleased with Akornor Cafeteria’s responsiveness to their eatery service needs.

Assurance is another dimension with consistent ratings. The data revealed that most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under the

dimension for Akornor Cafeteria. Out of 158 respondents, 64 of them “*agreed*” that the cafeteria staff were trustworthy, 68 respondents “*agreed*” that customers felt safe while interacting with the employees of Akornor , 69 persons “*agreed*” that Akornor employees were well-trained in attending to each customers’ needs and finally, 66 respondents “*agreed*” that Akornor Cafeteria provides meals which aligns with their brand mantra. It is important to note that Akornor’s brand mantra is built on satisfying the needs of the Ashesi Community; hence, they believe in the collection of feedback from consumers.

Similar to Responsiveness and Assurance, most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under the dimension, *Empathy*. However, 53 respondents were “*indifferent*” when asked if employees had the best interests of the customer at heart. This result was similar to that of the question posed regarding whether Akornor’s employees were sympathetic of the needs of customers, under the dimension *Reliability* discussed earlier. Nonetheless, 58 respondents, 60 respondents and 57 respondents chose the option “*agreed*” to the eatery’s space being designed to offer every customer individualized attention, to the employees providing customers with individual attention and lastly, to employees being aware of the needs of customers, respectively. This emphasizes the need of the management of Akornor to re-train their staff with respect to the expression of empathy to their customers.

Satisfaction is another dimension in the DINESERV model that was analyzed based on the data collected from the online survey. Results from the analysis revealed that once again, most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under this dimension for Akornor Cafeteria. 63 respondents, 61 respondents, 60 respondents and 58 respondents chose the likert scale rating, “*agreed*” to being satisfied

with the services that Akornor Cafeteria provides, to making payments for the services provided by Akornor Cafeteria, to recommending the eatery to others and to the quality of customer service that is offered by the employees at Akornor Cafeteria respectively. Finally, respondents are satisfied with Akornor's services and will recommend Akornor cafeteria to their colleagues and family.

Lastly, *Price* plays an important role as a dimension in the DINESERV model; hence it is very essential in the analysis of this study. Results from the data collected showed that respondents selected the option, "*indifferent*" for two out of three questions posed under this dimension for Akornor Cafeteria. 48 respondents and 55 respondents chose the option "*indifferent*", to Akornor Cafeteria serving more expensive food than their competitors and to the volume of each meal matching its price respectively. Of the three questions discussed under Price, 70 respondents that is the majority "*totally disagreed*" with the question concerning Akornor Cafeteria not having a regular fixed price for meals.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with some selected staff of Akornor Cafeteria in the bid to gather relevant information about the perspective of the staff in relation to the various factors questioned under the various dimensions in the DINESERV model. It will also help provide accurate data for the section on recommendations necessary for the completion of this paper. Several significant insights were obtained from the interviews that will help improve the life of staff as well as enhance students' appreciation of the work of the staff at Akornor Cafeteria. All the staff at Akornor Cafeteria are Ghanaian and act cordially with each other despite the pressures that arise from working in the food industry, specifically in a University. The staff

interviewed for this paper are from a range of departments namely the pantry, serving department, cleaning department and cashier or front desk department. Akornor Cafeteria's staff were asked a series of questions based on the DINESERV model to get their perspective on issues relating to customer service. This however, resulted in additional questions being asked based on the responses given, in order to obtain holistic information from the staff about their overall experience since they began working in the Cafeteria.

Data collected from the interviews revealed that most of the staff interviewed at Akornor Cafeteria "*strongly agree*" with all the factors listed under the dimensions, Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Satisfaction and Price per the questions they were asked in the interviews. The staff at Akornor Cafeteria laid emphasis on the health of students, hence, an important collective goal being to prepare healthy foods that also meet the taste needs of students. Staff also stressed the attitude of students to them and mentioned that most students are respectful and relate well with them, therefore, they are able to establish cordial relationships with them outside the duties they perform in the cafeteria. They were also pleased about the training and re-training programs organized by the Management of the eatery and encouraged that more intra-staff meetings should be organized to help build a stronger team based on the feedback received from students and fellow colleagues.

The interviews further revealed that most tasks performed outside the pantry department, which specifically prepares the meals, are not tedious and just require practice to attain perfection. Several staff also threw light on some of the equipment used in the eatery that slow down their work such as the Meal Plan System that crashes quite

often and a few other pantry appliances necessary for the preparation of certain essential foods. Finally, most of the staff interviewed would recommend the eatery to their colleagues and family members if there was a vacancy, on the condition that they can withstand the pressure that is attached to working in such a fast-paced environment.

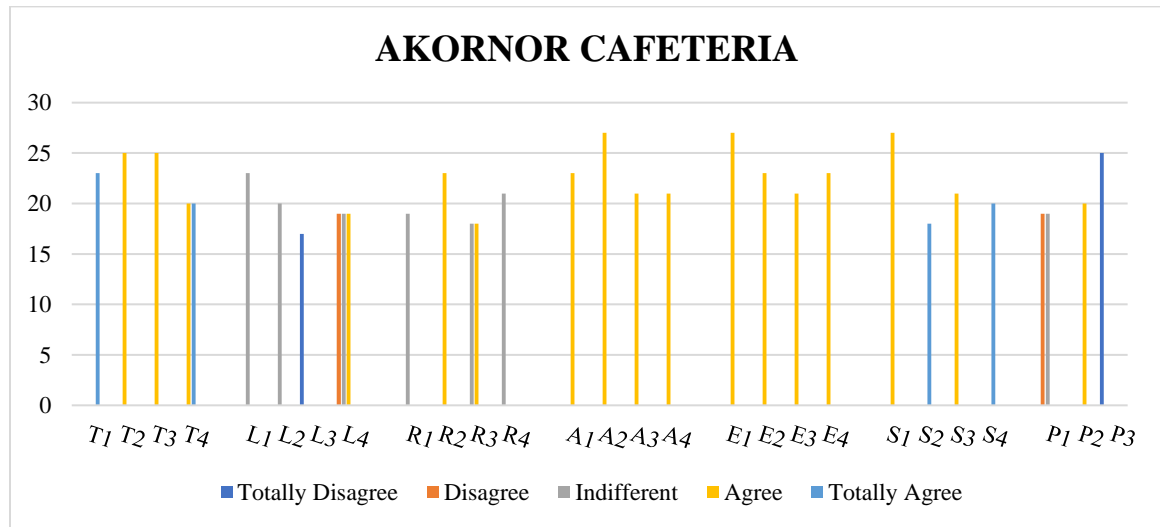


Figure 11. Overall Summary of Responses for Akornor Cafeteria

Where T represents Tangibles; L represents Reliability; R represents Responsiveness; A represents Assurance; E represents Empathy; S represents Satisfaction and 1,2,3 and 4 represent the different factors under the various dimensions in their respective orders. See Appendix A for a description on each factor.

4.4.2 Big Ben Cafeteria

Big Ben Cafeteria was the least preferred cafeteria out of the three cafeteria options, with only 65 respondents out of the total number of 290 respondents. Out of these 65 respondents, 50 respondents preferred this cafeteria for its food quality, followed by their proximity with 7 respondents and finally, their customer service with 6 respondents. This investigation therefore discloses that majority of the students who

patronize Big Ben Cafeteria do so mainly because of their Food Quality and Variety and not for their customer service. Respondents who filled the online survey were asked several questions based on the factors discussed under the DINESERV model. The following paragraphs will throw light on the opinions of respondents on each dimension specifically relating to Big Ben Cafeteria.

Respondents were asked to answer questions about the eatery with respect to some factors listed under the dimension *Tangibles*. For Big Ben Cafeteria, 23 of the respondents “*agreed*” that the equipment such as the POS and fridges among several others that the cafeteria uses were functional and this option received the most responses out of the total of 65 respondents that chose this cafeteria as their preferred one. 26 of the 65 respondents were “*indifferent*” that the equipment Big Ben Cafeteria uses were abreast of changes in modern technology. With respect to the grooming and appearance of staff, once again 26 respondents “*agreed*” that the staff at Big Ben Cafeteria were well-groomed. Finally, the last factor under *Tangibles* was related to the taste of the variety of foods served by Big Ben Cafeteria and 22 out of 65 respondents “*totally agreed*” that the meals of Big Ben Cafeteria provide excellent taste experiences.

Finally, respondents who chose Big Ben Cafeteria as their most preferred were very content with the taste of the food, rating the cafeteria with the highest grade (“*totally agreed*”) on the Likert scale, which was not seen in the cases of the two other cafeteria. Respondents were therefore pleased with the service Big Ben Cafeteria provides with respect to the dimension *Tangibles* in the DINESERV model, which discusses a variety of factors ranging from the physical appearance of staff to the attractiveness of the dining area among several others.

The second dimension in the DINESERV model that respondents answered questions on was *Reliability* and the analysis of the data threw light on some features in the quality of service delivered that Big Ben Cafeteria needs to pay attention to. 21 out of the total of 65 respondents were “*indifferent*” about Big Ben Cafeteria’s ability to keep their word in delivering what they promise their customers. 24 respondents were also “*indifferent*” about whether Big Ben Cafeteria sympathizes with customers when they have problems. This result was similar to that of Akornor Cafeteria and implies that it is a factor that Big Ben Cafeteria should look into and any necessary actions taken by management and employees as well. Some students had previously complained that Big Ben Cafeteria was not time-conscious and sometimes served them the wrong order for their food. The results of the data collected showed that 19 respondents “*disagreed*” that Big Ben Cafeteria was time-conscious in the delivery of their service. Finally, 25 respondents “*agreed*” that the staff at Big Ben Cafeteria were polite.

Results from the data collected revealed that the dimension, *Responsiveness*, had Big Ben Cafeteria receiving most of its ratings from respondents as “*indifferent*” for the various questions asked. 23 respondents, 22 respondents and 26 respondents chose the option “*indifferent*” to Big Ben Cafeteria alerting customers of the exact time services will be rendered, to the employees showing a willingness to help customers and finally, employees’ ability to answer questions completely, respectively. Additionally, 31 respondents chose the option, “*agreed*” to the employees providing customers with prompt responses to their questions. Nonetheless, the analysis of the data revealed that respondents had a divided view about the level of responsiveness with which Big Ben Cafeteria attends to their needs regarding the services they provide.

Assurance is the only dimension with consistent ratings for Big Ben Cafeteria. The statistics revealed that most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under the dimension, *Assurance* for Big Ben Cafeteria. 26 respondents, 32 respondents, 24 respondents and 26 respondents chose the option “*agreed*” to the staff of Big Ben Cafeteria being trustworthy, to customers feeling safe while interacting with the employees of Big Ben Cafeteria, to the employees being well-trained in attending to each customers’ needs and finally, to Big Ben Cafeteria providing meals which align with their brand mantra, respectively.

Similar to *Responsiveness*, most respondents were divided in the answering of the various questions asked under the dimension, *Empathy*. For the first time once again, in the analysis of the data for Big Ben Cafeteria, the researcher recorded the same number of 21 respondents selecting “*indifferent*” and “*agreed*” to the question regarding employees having the best interest of the customer at heart. On the other hand, 24 out of the total of 65 respondents chose the option, “*indifferent*” to the employees of Big Ben providing customers with individualized attention. Furthermore, 24 respondents and 26 respondents chose the option “*agreed*” to Big Ben Cafeteria designing the eatery’s space to offer every customer individualized attention and to employees being aware of the needs of customers, respectively. This emphasizes the need for the management of Big Ben Cafeteria to re-train their staff in areas where customers showed indifference.

Satisfaction is another dimension in the DINESERV model that was analyzed based on the data collected from the online survey. Results from the analysis revealed that most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for three out of four questions asked under this dimension for Big Ben Cafeteria. 25 respondents, 23 respondents and another

set of 23 respondents “*agreed*” to being satisfied with the services that Big Ben Cafeteria provides, to making payments for the services provided by Big Ben Cafeteria and finally to recommending the eatery to others respectively. 21 respondents were “*indifferent*” about the quality of customer service that was offered by the employees at Big Ben Cafeteria. This is supported by results of this study that showed that only 6 respondents chose Big Ben Cafeteria as their preferred cafeteria because of its customer service and therefore, possibly gives an indication of the attitude of front-line employees towards customer service. It may thus, require appropriate measures to be taken by management to ensure consistent satisfaction of all customers. Finally, respondents were satisfied with Big Ben’s services to some extent and will recommend the cafeteria to their colleagues.

Lastly, *Price* is the last dimension in the DINESERV model and plays an essential role in the analysis of this study. Results from the data collected showed that respondents selected the option, “*indifferent*” for two out of three questions asked under this dimension for Big Ben Cafeteria. 23 respondents and 21 respondents chose the option “*indifferent*” to Big Ben Cafeteria serving more expensive food than their competitors, and to the volume of each meal matching its price, respectively. Of the three questions discussed under *Price*, a total of 33 respondents “*totally disagreed*” with the statement that Big Ben Cafeteria had no regular fixed price for meals.

Data collected from the interviews revealed that most of the staff at Big Ben Cafeteria “*strongly agree*” with the various factors listed under the dimensions, *Tangibles*, *Reliability*, *Responsiveness*, *Assurance* and *Empathy* from the perspective of the employees. They also “*agree*” with the various factors listed under the dimensions, *Satisfaction* and *Price* per the questions they were asked in the interviews. The staff at

Big Ben Cafeteria laid emphasis on the attitude of students with respect to their politeness and mentioned that most students are respectful and polite with the exception of a few who are rude and this may be due to the various backgrounds from which these students may come from. They were also pleased about the training and re-training programs organized by the management of the eatery as well as the intra-staff meetings and encourage that more of such meetings be organized. They also encourage students to give feedback for services provided as it will help them improve upon their services and serve students better. Finally, most of the staff interviewed would recommend the eatery to other colleagues and family members if there was a vacancy.

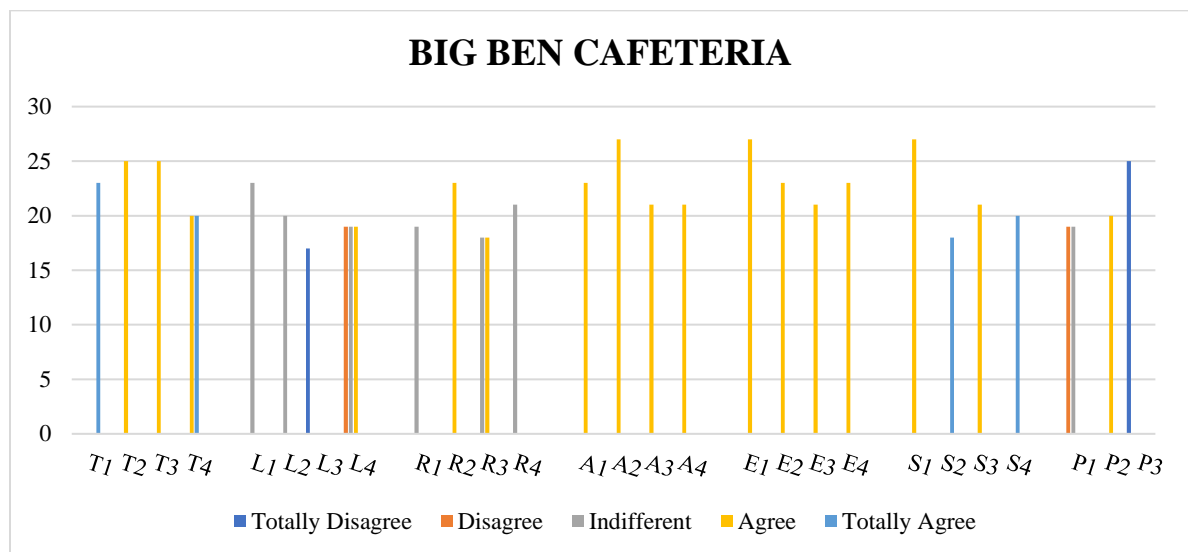


Figure 12. Overall Summary of Responses for Big Ben Cafeteria

Where T represents Tangibles; L represents Reliability; R represents Responsiveness; A represents Assurance; E represents Empathy; S represents Satisfaction and 1,2,3 and 4 represent the various factors under the various dimensions in their respective orders. See *Appendix A* for a description on each factor.

4.4.3 Lynes Cafeteria

The second most preferred eatery was Lynes Cafeteria with a total of 67 respondents. Out of this total number of respondents, only 8 of them chose Lynes Cafeteria for its customer service. 54 of the respondents chose Lynes cafeteria for their food quality and variety and 5 of the respondents chose this cafeteria because of proximity. Thus, it can be deduced that Lynes Cafeteria is most preferred for its food quality and variety as opposed to customer service and proximity.

Over the years, the DINESERV model has been used extensively for measuring the quality of service rendered, especially at eateries. Respondents who filled the online survey were requested to answer several questions based on the factors described under the DINESERV model. The following paragraphs will discuss the opinions of respondents who prefer Lynes Cafeteria regarding each dimension.

The first dimension of the DINESERV model is *Tangibles*. Respondents were asked to answer questions about the eatery with respect to some of these factors such as the equipment used, the use of modern technology the appearance of the staff as well as the taste experiences the eatery offers among other factors. For Lynes Cafeteria, 23 of the respondents “*totally agreed*” that the equipment such as the POS and fridges that the cafeteria uses are functional and this option received the most responses out of the total of 67 respondents that chose this cafeteria. 25 of the respondents “*agreed*” that the equipment Lynes Cafeteria uses is abreast of changes in modern technology. With respect to the grooming and appearance of staff, once again, 25 respondents “*agreed*” that the staff at Lynes Cafeteria are well-groomed. The last question under *Tangibles* was related to the taste of the variety of food served by Lynes Cafeteria and results showed that the

majority of respondents were split between the options, “*totally agreed*” and “*agreed*” with 20 respondents each choosing these two options that the meals of Lynes Cafeteria provide excellent taste experiences.

Finally, respondents who chose Lynes Cafeteria as their most preferred were very content with the equipment used in the delivery of the service with this factor receiving the highest number of “*totally agreed*” ratings on the Likert scale as compared to the other eateries analyzed in this study. Respondents are therefore pleased with the service Lynes Cafeteria provides with respect to this dimension.

The second dimension in the DINESERV model that respondents answered questions to was *Reliability* and the analysis of the data threw light on some features in the quality of service delivered that Lynes Cafeteria needs to pay attention to. 23 of the total of 67 respondents were “*indifferent*” about Lynes Cafeteria’s ability to keep its word in delivering on its promises to customers. 20 respondents were “*indifferent*” about the factor that asks whether Lynes Cafeteria sympathizes with customers when they have problems. This was a similar result to that of Big Ben Cafeteria and Akornor Cafeteria, discussed in earlier paragraphs. Management therefore needs to pay particular attention to employees’ relations with their customers. Again, the results of the data collected indicated that 17 respondents “*totally disagreed*” that Lynes Cafeteria was time-conscious in the delivery of its service. This could give some credence to rumors that have been circulated by students about the service Lynes Cafeteria offers. Finally, for the first time in the analysis of the data collected, 19 respondents each “*agreed*”, “*disagreed*” and were “*indifferent*” that the staff at Lynes Cafeteria were polite. This is an interesting discovery which shows that the views of students are clearly divided.

Results from the data collected revealed that under the dimension, *Responsiveness*, a wide range of responses were received for the various questions asked. 19 respondents and 21 respondents chose the option “*indifferent*” to Lynes Cafeteria alerting customers of the exact time services will be rendered and employees’ ability to answer questions completely, respectively. Additionally, 23 respondents chose the option, “*agreed*” to the employees providing customers with prompt responses to their questions and finally, respondents were split between the option “*agreed*” and “*indifferent*” with these options receiving responses from 18 respondents each as to employees showing a willingness to help customers. The inference made from this data is that the 67 respondents who prefer Lynes Cafeteria have a divided view about the level of responsiveness with which the cafeteria attends to their cafeteria needs.

Assurance is the one of the dimensions with consistent ratings for Lynes Cafeteria, similar to Big Ben Cafeteria. The statistics revealed that most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under this dimension. 23 respondents, 27 respondents, 21 respondents and again, 21 respondents all “*agreed*” to the staff of Lynes Cafeteria being trustworthy, to customers feeling safe while interacting with the employees of Lynes Cafeteria, to the employees being well-trained in attending to each customer’s needs and again, to Lynes Cafeteria providing meals which align with their brand mantra, respectively.

Similar to Assurance, most respondents provided consistent ratings for the dimension, *Empathy* for Lynes Cafeteria. Once again, the statistics revealed that most respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for the various questions asked under the dimension, *Empathy* for Lynes Cafeteria. 27 respondents, 23 respondents, 21 respondents

and 23 respondents chose the option “*agreed*” to Lynes Cafeteria designing its eatery’s space to offer every customer individualized attention, to the employees providing customers with individualized attention, to employees being aware of the needs of customers, and lastly, to the employees having the best interest of the customer at heart, respectively. This proves that most respondents are satisfied that Lynes Cafeteria provides them service quality with Empathy, and this is a plus for this cafeteria.

Satisfaction is another dimension in the DINESERV model that was analyzed based on the data collected from the online survey. Results from the analysis revealed that respondents selected the option, “*agreed*” for two out of four questions asked under this dimension for Lynes Cafeteria. 27 respondents and 21 respondents out of the total number of 67 respondents chose the option “*agreed*”, to being satisfied with the services that Lynes Cafeteria provides and to being satisfied with the quality of customer service that is offered by the employees at Lynes Cafeteria. This highlights the good customer service quality of the employees, and it is recommended in such instances that management praise employees as a form of motivation thereby spurring them on to do even more. Additionally, respondents selected the option, “*totally agreed*” for another two out of four questions posed under this dimension for Lynes Cafeteria. 18 respondents and 20 respondents “*totally agreed*” to making payments for the services provided by Lynes Cafeteria and to recommending the eatery to others respectively. Finally, respondents were generally satisfied with Lynes’ services and will recommend the cafeteria to their colleagues and family.

Lastly, Price is the last dimension in the DINESERV model and played an essential role in the analysis of this study. Results from the data collected showed that the

majority of respondents, which was 19, each selected the options “*indifferent*” and “*disagree*” to Lynes Cafeteria serving more expensive food than their competitors. Again, 25 respondents “*totally disagreed*” to Lynes Cafeteria having a regular fixed price for meals. Finally, 20 respondents “*agreed*” to the volume of each meal at Lynes Cafeteria matching its price.

Upon conducting semi-structured interviews with some selected staff of Lynes Cafeteria, relevant information was gathered for the general recommendations section of this paper. Several significant insights were also collected that will help improve the work and welfare of staff as well as enhance students’ appreciation of the work that the staff at Lynes Cafeteria perform on a daily basis in making food services available to them. Most of the staff at Lynes Cafeteria are Ghanaian with their head chef being a Francophone.

Data collected from the interviews revealed that most of the staff at Lynes Cafeteria “*strongly agree*” with the various factors listed under the dimensions, *Tangibles*, *Reliability*, *Responsiveness*, *Assurance* and *Empathy* from the perspective of the employees. They also mostly “*agree*” with the various factors listed under the dimensions, *Satisfaction* and *Price* per the questions they were asked in the interviews. The staff at Lynes Cafeteria also asserted that most students were polite and respectful to them. They were also pleased about the training and re-training programs organized by the management of the eatery as well as the intra-staff meetings and encourage that more of such meetings be organized. They also encourage students to give feedback for services provided as it will help them improve upon their services and serve students

better. Finally, most of the staff interviewed would recommend the eatery to other colleagues and family members if there was a vacancy.

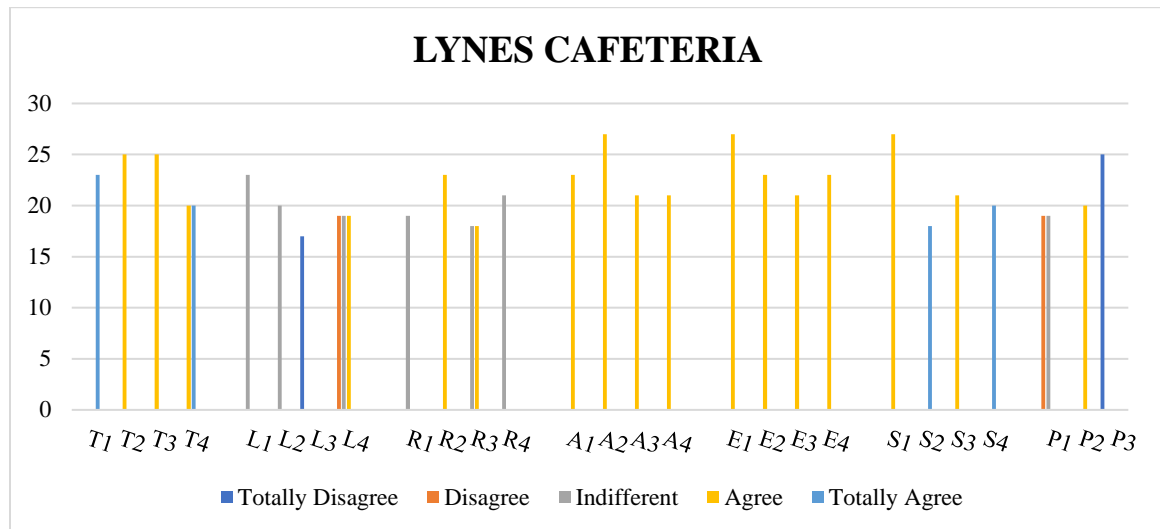


Figure 13. Overall Summary of Responses for Lynes Cafeteria

Where T represents Tangibles; L represents Reliability; R represents Responsiveness; A represents Assurance; E represents Empathy; S represents Satisfaction and 1,2,3 and 4 represent the various factors under the various dimensions in their respective orders. See *Appendix A* for a description on each factor.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study discovered that customer service does not play a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students and a student's perception of bad or good customer service quality may not affect their decision in choosing an eatery, as other factors such as food quality and variety or proximity could instead account for their choice.

This conclusion indicates that the two objectives of this study were met. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis were conducted to comprehensively answer the research questions. Furthermore, the hypothesis of this study was, in particular, analyzed quantitatively using the Chi-Square Test and the results revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between customer service and the choice of eatery of Ashesi Students (p-value of 0.882, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Additionally, a further analysis of the data revealed that Food quality and Variety, not Customer Service, play a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students. The results of the data collected also established that Akornor Cafeteria was the most preferred eatery of the three that were analyzed in this study.

5.2 Recommendations

Having established that Food quality and Variety, not Customer Service plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students, it is recommended that the various cafeterias focus on providing the best services to students with regard to their food quality and range of food menu items. The following paragraphs will provide a few

recommendations that the eateries in Ashesi as well as eateries in universities all around the world could adopt to help deliver quality service to their respective university communities.

5.2.1 Recommendations to Eateries

Since the study revealed that Food quality and Variety play a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi students, it is recommended that the various eateries focus on delivering a wide range of foods with consistent taste to retain their customers and attract new ones.

Secondly, the eateries that do not run a delivery service as part of their operations should consider adding a delivery service to their service offerings. Also, the management of the eateries should consider training and re-training their staff to practice and exhibit good customer service to build cordial and loyal relationships with the students, who are their customers.

Furthermore, the eateries could adopt a feedback booth where students can leave feedback, anonymous or otherwise, regarding the services that they have been provided by the eateries, on a regular basis to ensure that students are satisfied with the services and also pave way for improvement interventions by the eateries. Additionally, the management of the eateries should consider motivating and rewarding well-deserving employees by instituting employee reward measures such as “Employee of the Month” or giving them incentives that will encourage each staff member to give off their best.

Again, the eateries should adopt a timely system or approach to updating their menu boards which are used to show customers their available meals in order to help customers

make a decision more easily and quickly prior to patronizing the eatery. An employee could be assigned to make changes before the usual peak times of the day.

Finally, eateries should consider running maintenance services on all equipment used each academic year or semester depending on the life span and frequency of use of the equipment to ensure that they are always in good shape and of optimum quality and function.

5.2.2 Recommendations to Ashesi Students and the University

It is recommended that Ashesi students do well to be decisive in their food choices prior to arriving at the cashier to purchase meals as indecisiveness slows down service and lengthens queues at the eateries.

Furthermore, Ashesi students are also encouraged to be more polite towards the staff of various eateries. The eighth Ashesi Learning Goal is professionalism (Ashesi University, 2017) hence, students should exercise decorum at all times, though staff behavior may not always be pleasing to them.

5.3 Limitation of the Research

The research required that a sample of 300 respondents made up of both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian respondents, complete the online survey. The limitation of the study was that at the end of the data collection, the estimated sample for non-Ghanaian students, which was 50, was not achieved. The non-Ghanaian respondents were 38 instead, with the Ghanaian respondents being far greater, that is 269 respondents. However, this did not significantly affect the analysis of the study.

REFERENCES

- 2019/2020 Academic Year Statistical Report, Academic Registry, Ashesi University.
Retrieved on 27 September 2019.
- Abu-ELSamen, A. A., Akroush, M. N., Al-Khawaldeh, F. M., & Al-Shibly, M. S. (2011). Towards an integrated model of customer service skills and customer loyalty: The mediating role of customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 21(4), 349-380.
- Adeinat, I. (2019). Measuring Service Quality Efficiency Using DINESERV. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 13(3), 591-604.
- Aksoydan, E. (2007). Hygiene Factors Influencing Customers' Choice Of Dining-Out Units: Findings From A Study Of University Academic Staff. *Journal of Food Safety*, 27(3), 300-316.
- Albrecht, K. and Zemke, R. (2002), *Service America in the New Economy*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, pp. 61-62, 115-116.
- Al-Tit, A. A. (2015). The effect of service and food quality on customer satisfaction and hence customer retention. *Asian Social Science*, 11(23), 129.
- Ashesi University. (2017). *Our 8 Learning Goals*. Retrieved 1 May 2020 from <https://www.ashesi.edu.gh/academics/learning-goals.html>
- Babić-Hodović, V., Arslanagić-Kalajdžić, M., & Banda, A. (2015). Hotel services quality in developing countries measured by SERVQUAL model. *Acta Geographica Bosniae et Herzegovinae br*, 4, 5-26.
- Brannen, J. (2017). *Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. Routledge.
- Brewster, Z. W. (2012). Racialized customer service in restaurants: A quantitative assessment of the statistical discrimination explanatory framework. *Sociological inquiry*, 82(1), 3-28.
- Brock, D. (2009). *Aftersales management: Creating a successful aftersales strategy to reduce costs, improve customer service and increase sales*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Brown, E. (2013). Consumers and Stakeholders. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 88(1/2), 21.
- Bougoure, U. S., & Neu, M. K. (2010). Service quality in the Malaysian fast food industry: An examination using DINESERV. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 31(2), 194-212.

- Cairncross, G., Wilde, S., & Hutchinson, L. (2008). Training and Service Quality—A Case Study Analysis of Regional Australian Restaurants. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 5(2), 149-163.
- Chang, K. C. (2013). How reputation creates loyalty in the restaurant sector. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(4), 536-557.
- Conroy, R. (2015). Sample size A rough guide. *Beaumontethics* [referenced 30. September 2015]. Available on http://www.beaumontethics.ie/docs/application/sample_size_calculation.pdf.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.
- du Plessis, F. M. (2016). *Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast food outlets in Gauteng* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).
- Dabholkar, P. A. (2015). How to improve perceived service quality by increasing customer participation. In *Proceedings of the 1990 academy of marketing science (AMS) annual conference* (pp. 483-487). Springer, Cham.
- Dong, B., Sivakumar, K., Evans, K. R., & Zou, S. (2015). Effect of customer participation on service outcomes: the moderating role of participation readiness. *Journal of service research*, 18(2), 160-176.
- Dougherty, L. (Ed.). (2015). *The Royal Marsden manual of clinical nursing procedures*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Fang, H., & Moro, A. (2011). Theories of statistical discrimination and affirmative action: A survey. In *Handbook of social economics* (Vol. 1, pp. 133-200). North-Holland.
- Farahiyan, L., Kaptan, S. S., & Jadhavar, S. U. (2015). An Exploratory Study Of Fast Food Restaurant Selection Criteria Amongst College Students Through Conjoint Analysis. *Journal of Commerce and Management Thought*, 6(3), 487.
- Fogli, L. (2006). *Customer service delivery* (Vol. 4). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Freehill-Maye, L. (2019). Dining on Demand: New ordering and food delivery options serve students who increasingly want their meals when and where it's most convenient for them. *University Business*, 22(2), 25-26. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=134950767&site=ehost-live>

- Given, L. M. (2015). *100 questions (and answers) about qualitative research*. SAGE Publications.
- Goodman, J. (2019). *Strategic customer service: Managing the customer experience to increase positive word of mouth, build loyalty, and maximize profits*. Amacom.
- Green, S. (2015). *McDonald's*. Bellwether Media.
- Groth, M., & Grandey, A. (2012). From bad to worse: Negative exchange spirals in employee–customer service interactions. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 2(3), 208-233.
- Gupta, S., Lehmann, D. R., & Stuart, J. A. (2004). Valuing customers. *Journal of marketing research*, 41(1), 7-18.
- Hansen, K. V. (2014). Development of SERVQUAL and DINESERV for measuring meal experiences in eating establishments. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 14(2), 116-134.
- Heinonen, K., Helkkula, A., Holmlund-Rytkönen, M., Mustak, M., Jaakkola, E., & Halinen, A. (2013). Customer participation and value creation: a systematic review and research implications. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*.
- Hendrickson, B. M. (2016). *U.S. Patent No. 9,390,424*. Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
- Hill, N., & Alexander, J. (2017). *The handbook of customer satisfaction and loyalty measurement*. Routledge.
- Hwang, J. (2008). Restaurant table management to reduce customer waiting times. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 11(4), 334-351.
- Inghilleri, L., & Solomon, M. (2010). *Exceptional service, exceptional profit*. New York: American Management Association.
- Islam, N., Mustafi, M. A. A., Ahmed, S., Rashid, M., Kabir, A. U., & Nazrul, T. (2018). *Factors Influencing the Selection of Restaurant for Dining in Dhaka City of Bangladesh*. 14.
- Jahanshahi, A. A., Gashti, M. A. H., Mirdamadi, S. A., Nawaser, K., & Khaksar, S. M. S. (2011). Study the effects of customer service and product quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(7), 253-260.

- Jain, M. K. (2013). An analysis of marketing mix: 7Ps or more. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(4), 23-28.
- Kaufman, R. (2012). *Uplifting service*. Evolve Publishing.
- Kantsperger, R., & Kunz, W. H. (2010). Consumer trust in service companies: a multiple mediating analysis. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 20(1), 4-25.
- Keith, N. K., & Simmers, C. S. (2011). Measuring service quality perceptions of restaurant experiences: The disparity between comment cards and DINESERV. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 14(1), 20-32.
- Kendall, S. D. (2006). Customer service from the customer's perspective. *Customer service delivery: Research and best practices*, 3-21.
- Kim, W. (2009). Customers' responses to customer orientation of service employees in full-service restaurants: A relational benefits perspective. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 10(3), 153-174.
- Kincaid, C., Baloglu, S., Mao, Z., & Busser, J. (2010). What really brings them back? The impact of tangible quality on affect and intention for casual dining restaurant patrons. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(2), 209-220.
- Kumar, S. & Hemamala, K. (n.d.). *Factors Influencing Customer Service in Fast Food Restaurants in Tamilnadu*. 4.
- Longhurst, R. (2003). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. *Key methods in geography*, 3(2), 143-156.
- Lucas, R. W. (2012). *Customer service: Skills for success*. McGraw-Hill.
- Markovic, S., Komsic, J., & Stifanic, M. (2013). Measuring service quality in city restaurant settings using DINESERV scale. *Recent Advances in Business Management and Marketing*, 176-181.
- McFarlane, D. A. (2013). The strategic importance of customer value. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 2(1), 5.
- McHugh, M. L. (2013). The chi-square test of independence. *Biochemia medica: Biochemia medica*, 23(2), 143-149.
- Miao, H., & Wang Bassham, M. (2007). Embracing customer service in libraries. *Library Management*, 28(1/2), 53-61.

- Michel, S., Bowen, D., & Johnston, R. (2008). Making the most of customer complaints. *Wall Street Journal*, 4.
- Mok, C., Sparks, B., & Kadampully, J. (2013). *Service quality management in hospitality, tourism, and leisure*. Routledge.
- Naik, C. K., Gantasala, S. B., & Prabhakar, G. V. (2010). Service quality (SERVQUAL) and its effect on customer satisfaction in retailing. *European journal of social sciences*, 16(2), 231-243.
- Neild, M. (2002). *GCSE Applied Business for Edexcel: Double Award*. Heinemann.
- Newby, T., & McManus, S. (2002). *The customer service pocketbook*. Pocketbooks.
- Pacheco, L. M. (2018). An analysis of online reviews of upscale Iberian restaurants.
- Pallant, J., & Manual, S. S. (2010). A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS. *Berkshire UK: McGraw-Hill Education*.
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1993). More on improving service quality measurement. *Journal of retailing*, 69(1), 140-148.
- Pariyar, S. (2014). Importance of Customer Service in Restaurant Business.
- Pecinová, Z., & Branská, L. (2008). The Possibilities of Using the Optimum Concept of Individual Customer Service System. *Economics & Management*.
- Poku, K., & Zakari, M. (2013). Impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry: An Empirical Study from Ghana.
- Qin, G., & Prybutok, V. R. (2008). Determinants of customer-perceived service quality in fast-food restaurants and their relationship to customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Quality Management Journal*, 15(2), 35-50.
- Ravichandran, K., Mani, B. T., Kumar, S. A., & Prabhakaran, S. (2010). Influence of service quality on customer satisfaction application of servqual model. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(4), 117.
- Ryu, K., & Lee, J. S. (2017). Examination of restaurant quality, relationship benefits, and customer reciprocity from the perspective of relationship marketing investments. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(1), 66-92.
- Sabir, R. I., Irfan, M., Akhtar, N., Pervez, M. A., & ur Rehman, A. (2014). Customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry; examining the model in local industry perspective. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, 4(1), 18.

- Schmit, M. J., & Allscheid, S. P. (1995). Employee Attitudes and Customer Satisfaction: Making Theoretical And Empirical Connections. *Personnel Psychology*, 48(3), 521–536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01768.x>
- Schmitt, B. H. (2010). *Customer experience management: A revolutionary approach to connecting with your customers*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Shandilya, G., Singh, S., & Srivastava, A. (2018). Impact of Consumers' Perception on the Service Quality of Fast-Food Sector. Retrieved from http://www.iaeme.com/MasterAdmin/UploadFolder/IJMET_09_02_008/IJMET_09_02_008.pdf
- Shi, Y. Q., & Wang, J. J. (2011). Evaluation of service quality of restaurant enterprise based on SERVQUAL. In *2011 International Conference on Management and Service Science* (pp. 1-3). IEEE.
- Stevens, P., Knutson, B., & Patton, M. (1995). DINESERV: Measuring service quality in quick service, casual/theme, and fine dining restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 3(2), 34–44.
- Sue, V. M., & Ritter, L. A. (2012). *Conducting online surveys*. Sage.
- Sumaedi, S., Bakit, I. G. M. Y., & Metasari, N. (2011). The effect of students' perceived service quality and perceived price on student satisfaction. *Management Science and Engineering*, 5(1), 88.
- Tinne, W. S. (2012). Factors Affecting Selection of Upscale Restaurants in Dhaka City. *ASA University Review*, 6(1).
- Torres, E. N., & Kline, S. (2013). From customer satisfaction to customer delight: Creating a new standard of service for the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(5), 642-659.
- Townsend, P. L., & Gebhardt, J. E. (2019). *Quality is everybody's business*. Routledge.
- Tucker, M., & Pitt, M. (2010). Improving service provision through better management and measurement of customer satisfaction in facilities management. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, 12(4), 220-233.
- Unit, E. I. (2010). Greater expectations: Keeping pace with customer service demands in Asia Pacific. *Economist*.
- Vance, R. J. (2006). Organizing for customer service. *Customer service delivery: Research and best practices*, 22-51.

- Vaughan, I. (2011). *Strategies and Tools for Delivering Great Customer Service*[Ebook]. Blue Beetle Books. Retrieved from <https://cfsask.ca/images/pdfs/eBooks/ebook-Customer-Service.pdf>
- Weinstein, A. (2016). *Superior customer value: Strategies for winning and retaining customers*. CRC Press.
- Wilson, A., Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. (2016). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm*.
- Yacout, O. M. (2010). Service quality, relational benefits, and customer loyalty in a non-western context. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 75(1), 4.
- Zibran, M. F. (2007). Chi-squared test of independence. *Department of Computer Science, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada*.

APPENDICES

Appendix A**Questionnaire For Online Survey****CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY**

*** Required**

REQUEST FOR CONSENT

1. Would you like to participate in this survey? *

Mark only one option

- Yes *Skip to Question 2*
- No

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Which class are you in? *

Mark only one option

- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023

2. Which nationality are you? *

Mark only one option

- Ghanaian
- Non-Ghanaian

3. Have you eaten from all three eateries on campus (Akornor, Big Ben and Lynes Cafeteria)?*

Mark only one option

- Yes *Skip to Question 4*
- No *Skip to Question 17*

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

4. Out of these three eateries on the Ashesi campus, which one do you prefer? *

Mark only one option

- Akornor Cafeteria

- Big Ben Cafeteria
- Lynes Cafeteria

5. Based on your answer in Question 4, kindly select the main reason why you patronize this eatery? *

Mark only one option

- Customer Service
- Price
- Food Quality
- Proximity
- Delivery Service
- Other

6. What were your perceptions of customer service quality at your preferred eatery upon patronizing it?

Customer Perceived Service Quality can be defined as the difference between a customer's expectation of service quality and a customer's perception of the service rendered or received, based on factors contributing towards the final output of the service (Sumaedi, Bakit & Metasari, 2011).

7. On a scale of 1-5, kindly select which factors fully describe customer service quality at the eatery when you patronized it.

1= Totally disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Indifferent; 4=Agree; 5= Totally agree

8. i. TANGIBLES: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row.</i>					
The equipment (fridges, POS) that the eatery uses is functional					
The equipment that the eatery uses is abreast with modern technological changes					
The employees in the eatery are properly dressed and have well-groomed appearances					
The eatery has meals that provide excellent taste experiences					
9. ii. RELIABILITY: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row.</i>					
The eatery keeps to their word in delivering what they promise					
The eatery sympathizes with customers when they have problems					
The eatery is time conscious in the delivery of their service					
The employees of the eatery are polite					

10. iii. RESPONSIVENESS: * <i>Mark only one box per row.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The eatery tells customers the exact time services will be rendered					
The employees provide prompt responses to questions					
Employees show a willingness to help customers					
Employees can answer questions completely					
11. iv. ASSURANCE: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Customers can trust employees of the eatery					
Customers feel safe interacting with the eatery's employees					
The employees are well-trained and experienced to attend to customers' needs					
The eatery provides meals that align with their brand mantra					
12. v. EMPATHY: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The eatery is designed to give each customer some level of individualized attention					
The employees give customers individualized attention					
The employees are aware of the customers' need					
The employees have the best interest of the customer at heart					
13. vi. SATISFACTION: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the services that the eatery provides					
I am satisfied with making payments for the services provided by the eatery					
The quality of customer service has a significant effect on my satisfaction.					
I can recommend the eatery to others					
14. vii. PRICE: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The meals the eatery serves are more expensive than their competitors					
The volume of each meal matches its price					
The eatery does not have a regular fixed price for meals					

N.B. The numbers that directly precede the questions are the original numbers of the questions, however because of the adaptation of the question from Google Forms, they had to be renumbered hence the outer numbers.

15. 8. How would you rate the level of customer service treatment of your preferred eatery? * *Mark only one box*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Poor

Excellent

16. 9. What can your preferred eatery selected in Question 4 do to improve their customer service?

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

17. 4. Out of these three major eateries on the Ashesi campus, which one have you not eaten from? *

Mark only one option

- Akornor Cafeteria
- Big Ben Cafeteria
- Lynes Cafeteria

18. 5. Why have you not eaten from this eatery? (Tick all that apply)*

Tick all that apply

- Bad Customer Service
- Poor Delivery Service
- Poor Food Quality
- Bad Pricing
- Unfavorable proximity to lecture hall or hostel
- Other

19. 6. Kindly share your experience based on your response in Question 5. *
-

20. 7. Of the two remaining eateries which you have you not eaten from, which one do you most prefer? *

Mark only one option

- Akornor Cafeteria
- Big Ben Cafeteria
- Lynes Cafeteria

21. 8. What were your perceptions of customer service quality at your preferred eatery upon patronizing it?

Customer Perceived Service Quality can be defined as the difference between a customer's expectation of service quality and a customer's perception of the service rendered or received, based on factors contributing towards the final output of the service (Sumaedi, Bakit & Metasari, 2011).

9. On a scale of 1-5, kindly select which factors fully describe customer service quality at the eatery when you patronized it.
 1= *Totally disagree*; 2= *Disagree*; 3= *Indifferent*; 4= *Agree*; 5= *Totally agree*

22. i. TANGIBLES: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row.</i>					
The equipment (fridges, POS) that the eatery uses is functional					
The equipment that the eatery uses is abreast with modern technological changes					
The employees in the eatery are properly dressed and have well-groomed appearances					
The eatery has meals that provide excellent taste experiences					
23. ii. RELIABILITY: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row.</i>					
The eatery keeps to their word in delivering what they promise					
The eatery sympathizes with customers when they have problems					
The eatery is time conscious in the delivery of their service					
The employees of the eatery are polite					
24. iii. RESPONSIVENESS: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row.</i>					
The eatery tells customers the exact time services will be rendered					
The employees provide prompt responses to questions					
Employees show a willingness to help customers					
Employees can answer questions completely					
25. iv. ASSURANCE: *	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mark only one box per row</i>					
Customers can trust employees of the eatery					
Customers feel safe interacting with the eatery's employees					
The employees are well-trained and experienced to attend to customers' needs					
The eatery provides meals that align with their brand mantra					

26. v. EMPATHY: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The eatery is designed to give each customer some level of individualized attention					
The employees give customers individualized attention					
The employees are aware of the customers' need					
The employees have the best interest of the customer at heart					
27. vi. SATISFACTION: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the services that the eatery provides					
I am satisfied with making payments for the services provided by the eatery					
The quality of customer service has a significant effect on my satisfaction.					
I can recommend the eatery to others					
28. vii. PRICE: * <i>Mark only one box per row</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The meals the eatery serves are more expensive than their competitors					
The volume of each meal matches its price					
The eatery does not have a regular fixed price for meals					

29. 10. How would you rate the level of customer service treatment of your preferred eatery? *

Mark only one box

1	2	3	4	5
Poor				Excellent

30. 11. What can your preferred eatery selected in Question 6 do to improve their customer service? *

Google

This content is neither
created nor endorsed by
Google.

Appendix B

Interview Guidelines For Selected Staff And Proprietors Of The Various Eateries

1. Which nationality are you?
 - Ghanaian
 - Non-Ghanaian
2. What measures have you put in place to ensure that the quality of customer service your staff exhibit is good?
3. Which department in the eatery do you work?
 - Serving Department
 - Pantry/ Kitchen/ Cleaning Department
 - Cashier/ Front Desk Department
4. How long have you been working in this eatery and what is your shift schedule ?
5. Below are factors that will aid in describing customer service quality at the eatery:

1. i. TANGIBLES: *
Are the equipment (fridges, POS) that the eatery uses functional?
Are the equipment the eatery uses abreast with modern technological changes?
Are you comfortable with the attires the Management of the eatery offers?
Do you eat meals that the cafeteria serves?
2. ii. RELIABILITY: *
Does the eatery keep to their word in delivering what they promise students?
How does the eatery sympathize with customers when they have problems?
Is the eatery time conscious in the delivery of their service? How is this achieved?
Are the students and fellow colleagues polite?
3. iii. RESPONSIVENESS: *
Does the eatery tell customers the exact time services will be rendered?
Do you provide prompt responses to questions when students ask?
Do you show a willingness to help customers when they are in need?
4. iv. ASSURANCE: *
Can students trust what you tell them concerning foods served at the eatery?
What kind of the training do you receive as an employee?
Do you have a cordial relationship with your fellow colleagues?
5. v. EMPATHY: *
Is the eatery is designed to give each customer some level of individualized attention?
Do you give customers individualized attention?
Would you say you have the best interest of the customer at heart? How do you display this?

6. vi. SATISFACTION: *
Are you satisfied with the tasks you have been assigned to do in this eatery?
Do you think the quality of customer service in the eatery is good?
Will you recommend the eatery to your family members or colleagues if there was a vacancy?
7. vii. PRICE: *
What do you think about the prices of food at the eatery?
Do you think the volume of each meal matches its price?

6. What are the peak times of service in the eatery?
7. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations that the Management of the eatery can adopt to improve the lives of the employees?

Appendix C

Contingency Table for Chi- Square Test

Customer Service Rating and Preferred Eatery Crosstabulation		Preferred Eatery			Total
		Akornor Cafeteria	Big Ben Cafeteria	Lynes Cafeteria	
Customer Service Rating	Poor & Fairly Poor	4	4	2	10
	Neutral	48	20	23	91
	Very good	86	34	35	155
	Excellent	20	7	7	34
Total		158	65	67	290

Figure 14. Contingency Table for Chi-Square Test of Hypothesis

Appendix D**CONSENT FORM**

My name is Esi Chrissie Amissah-Arthur and I would like to ask your permission to be a part of my final year Thesis project titled “*An Investigation Into The Role Of Customer Service In The Choice Of Eatery Of Ashesi University Students*”. The aim of this research is to determine whether customer service quality plays a significant role in the choice of eatery of Ashesi University students and whether a student’s perception of good or bad customer service treatment affects their decision in choosing an eatery. The approach that will be used to gather data for this study is through the use of an online survey and interviews. This will therefore require answers to all questions relating to the experiences of students, staff and the proprietors of the various eateries with respect to the subject of customer service.

The completion of the online survey could last from 3-4 minutes depending on the individual participant and the interview could last for about 10-15 minutes also dependent on the individual participant. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study. Nonetheless, if any participant experiences any discomfort, it will be addressed accordingly and appropriately. The benefit of this study to students is that they have an opportunity to experience better service after the eateries implement the recommendations drawn from the study. The proprietor and staff of the various eateries can also benefit from increased profits as a result of their decision to adhere to the opinions of students as well as their colleagues hence improve their customer service quality which will in turn draw more customers.

All information gathered from this study will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons. The researcher will be the only individual who has access to the Google Forms and the research materials used for the interviews which will be kept in a locked cabinet. There will be no costs for participating in this study and you will also not be paid to participate in the research for this study. Participation is exclusively voluntary and allows participants to withdraw their participation at any point in time.

For additional information concerning the study, you may contact Esi Chrissie Amissah-Arthur, Final Year Business Administration Major at Ashesi University on 0201170844. You may also send her an email at esi.arthur@ashesi.edu.gh or kindly contact her Supervisor, Dr. Josephine Djan at jdjan@ashesi.edu.gh.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subject Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact irb@ashesi.edu.gh

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (Tick as appropriate)

_____ I confirm that I have agreed to be interviewed for the study “*An Investigation Into The Role Of Customer Service In The Choice Of Eatery Of Ashesi University Students*” and that the procedures guiding the study have been explained to me by the researcher during the consent process.

_____ I confirm that I have the opportunity to make enquiries about this study and I’m satisfied with the responses that have been provided.

_____ I understand that I grant access to data to authorized persons

I consent to participate in the above research study.

Date

Signature or mark of participant

I certify that the purpose, benefits and possible risks associated with participating in the research have been explained to the above participant.

Date

Signature of person who obtained

consent